

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 958.—VOL. XXXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 10, 1881.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A DESPERATE ENCOUNTER.]

## MY LADY'S LOVERS.

A NEW NOVEL.

BY AN EMINENT AUTHOR.

### CHAPTER VIII.

LUCY DASHWOOD.

"Twas morn, but not the ray that gilds the summer boughs among,  
When beauty walks in gladness forth with all her light and song—  
"Twas morn, but mist and cloud hung deep on lonely vale,  
And shadows like the wings of death were out upon the gale.

LORD ARDINLAUN looked with no pleasure upon the prospect of going to Brighton, and could he, with any show of decency, have returned to Scotland, he would have done so. But the interests of Lady Pearl demanded that he should not abandon southern society yet, and he set about getting a suitable place.

"Brighton is dearer than London," sighed Lady Ardinlaun, "but if Pearl marries well Melville will compensate us."

"I don't know," replied Lord Ardinlaun, shaking his sagacious head. "Melville is going ahead, and he will damage Denvilles before he comes really into possession of it. When that is done he will have nothing to spare."

But it was destined that they were not to go to Brighton, but to a very different place, and it came about in this way.

Lucy Dashwood, who had met Pearl at Richmond, fell in love with her there as much as one woman can fall in love with another, and in her strong, healthy, irresistible fashion, laid siege to her heart.

"I want such a friend as you," she said, "and it strikes me that you have no bon camarade among our sex."

"I have not thought of making a friend," Pearl said.

"Then think of it now," replied Lucy. "Here is an opportunity that may never occur again. Embrace it."

Pearl laughed, and, really liking Lucy, encouraged her, so that they were soon fast friends, thereby affording another illustration of the magnetic influence opposite natures have for each other.

Lucy Dashwood was full of life, with the full charms that are rather popular everywhere, and are particularly ensnaring to men like Tommy Dray, while Lady Pearl possessed a beauty that never asserted itself, but quietly laid hold of the senses and gently steeped them with a lotus-like power in love.

"Where are you going after this season?" asked Lucy.

"To Brighton, I think," Pearl answered.

"To Brighton, indeed?" said Lucy, with a shrug of contempt. "And what sort of life will you lead there? Salt water bath in the morning, stroll on the promenade, late breakfast, and drive up and down that everlasting King's Road, luncheon, then drive again, then dinner, then a drowsy evening, and finally to bed, with a heart as weary as a monotonous life can make it."

"But there is some society there," urged Pearl.

"So there is, but no freedom," said Lucy. "Now give up the Brighton idea, and come to our place in Essex. We have a tumble-down old home there called the Dumbdikes. Curious name, isn't it? But it is a curious place—all odds and ends and holes and corners."

"Then indeed it must be an odd place."

"You understand me? It's big and rambling, and with ghosts and all that sort of thing, and it is there we go for three months in the year and fill the place with guests. We are poor, you know, but we economise for nine months to do the big thing, and for the three months I assure you we do it."

"You are very frank," said Lady Pearl, laughing.

"Why should I not be?" asked Lucy, "especially with you. But let me go on with the allurements of Dumbdikes. It is such a glorious place for spoons."

"My dear Lucy—spoons—"

"Yes, spoons; it is the best word I know of for that very popular tomfoolery, and it is very enjoyable after all. I have secured my cavalier. You know Tommy Dray?"

"Of course."

"Well, that is my spoon, and a very good one too. Meg has got young Claverly, of the Guards—only a temporary affair that—and now is there anybody you would like me to ask?"

"No one, thank you," Pearl said, with a little additional colour in her cheeks. "But I have not accepted yet. I must consult Lady Ardinlaun."

"Will you come if I win her over?"

"With pleasure," replied Pearl, stifling a sigh.

Pleasure was very seldom by her side now, for where was Hugh Egerton? If he could have been invited there might have been some joy in going down to the oddly-named Dumbdikes, but now it really mattered to her very little whether she went.

The invitation proved to be very acceptable to the Ardinauns. It would save the expense of a house at Brighton, and as there was to be a goodly company gathered, Lord Ardinaun thought Pearl would have as good a chance of securing a husband there as she would have had by the sea.

"Better," said Lady Ardinaun. "For real, genuine love-making there is nothing like the freedom of a country house."

Colonel Dashwood left most of the inviting to his daughters, and only asked a few particular friends, but he took the precaution to look at their list before asking anybody, in case the Dumbdikes should be overtaxed. He performed this task the day after Pearl and the Ardinauns were invited, and found that he had room for two men beyond those he had already invited.

"I shall fill up the gaps at the club," he said. "You have nobody you particularly care for, I suppose?"

"No," replied Lucy, merrily. "I have my dear little man, and Meg has her poodle. We shall do for the present. Invite somebody for Lady Pearl."

"Not a bad idea," said the colonel, and went off to his club.

There he asked Harry Delormes, who knew everything about everybody, who would be the two best men to invite, and was promptly informed that Lord Baidenstone and Sir Charles Friarly were the men he wanted.

"And Friarly a widower of two months only!" exclaimed the colonel.

"He is dreadfully spoons on Lady Pearl," said Harry Delormes. "What matters how long it is since he lost his last? He is not a man to compute time in a love affair."

So the colonel obeyed the decrees of Fate, and did his share of bringing the men whose lives were invisibly linked together under his roof. He looked them up, spoke in a casual way of the people who were going to Dumbdikes, and both men accepted readily.

The colonel and his two handsome girls left town the next day accompanied by one of the guests only—viz., Tommy Dray, who had promised to make himself useful in getting the tennis court and archery ground in order.

He was dreadfully in love, and sat very close to Lucy all the way down, while Meg and the colonel talked in whispers and looked out of the opposite window at the decidedly uninteresting country spread out before their eyes.

Lucy was not what might be called a vain woman, but she liked to be admired, and Tommy's intense admiration was not distasteful to her.

He stood a little in awe of her blooming beauty, but she was so affable to him that he presently became bolder, and, having made sure that the colonel was not looking, he quietly laid hold of one of her fingers. Finding he met with no repulse, he soon secured her whole hand, and went off and away into the clouds with bliss.

"I suppose there are no tunnels going down?" he whispered.

"None this side of the Dumbdikes," replied Lucy.

"What a bore," said Tommy, dolorously.

"Why?" asked Lucy, with charming innocence stamped upon her pretty face.

"I like a tunnel—sometimes," Tommy replied.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Dray," said Lucy, making a feeble attempt to withdraw her hand, "that you are a very dreadful person."

"Oh, no! I am not," returned Tommy, pulling up his collar with his disengaged hand. He denied the soft imputation, but it was not unpleasant to him. "But tunnels are awfully jolly—when—when you are—ahem!—in love and NOT ALONE."

"Oh! I cannot listen to such things," said Lucy, putting up her hand and laughing behind it. "I am afraid, Mr. Dray, that I have been very mistaken in you."

"No, you are not," said he, growing bolder, and his arm began to steal round her waist.

She sat still, unconscious of this bold invasion, and talked of common things, until she found his face very close to hers.

"Don't be alarmed, Lucy," he said, hurriedly.

"Don't go away from me. You can't tell how I love you, and if you see nothing offensive in the name of Dray and nothing repulsive in me have mercy on me. I never thought I should love anyone as I do you."

"You are a very good fellow," said Lucy, "and I like you."

"Do you, now?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Upon your honour?"

"Upon anything you like, but you must not squeeze me nor attempt to kiss me until you have spoken to the colonel. He may object, you know."

"So he may," said Tommy, with a despairing look in his eyes, "and if he does I shall—I don't know what I shall do. Let me hold your hand, dear Lucy—it may be for the last time."

There might have been a comical side to Tommy's love, but it was very fervent and very honest. He could conceive nothing so desirable on earth as the possession of the beautiful Lucy for a wife. And he had won her, if the colonel's consent could be obtained, with a small amount of trouble that amazed him.

He could not ask the colonel for his daughter just then, travelling by rail, when the rattle of the carriage acted as a bar to general conversation, so he bottled his impatience, as well as he could, and made hay while the sun of his love shone.

They arrived at a small country station about eight in the evening, when a carriage of great respectability, but of somewhat faded beauty, was waiting for them. Into this they got and rode for an hour or more along a lonely road to Dumbdikes.

"Your place is very quiet, colonel, I should think," Tommy said.

"We have nothing near us, and only one place for miles round; but we don't want society when we fill our house with it."

"I don't think I want society at all," said Tommy.

"All—that is—I like a quiet life."

Lucy tried to look grave, but Meg was in a state bordering on explosion.

The colonel, however, kept his countenance admirably, and really appeared to be unconscious of the state of mind and heart which had led Tommy into making this declaration.

Dumbdikes at length stood out before them in the twilight, a rambling, red brick building, with towers and gables covered with ivy and creeping plants, and with handsome but badly-kept grounds around it. A pine wood at the back threw the old house into bold relief, and Tommy said it was charming.

Dinner was ready for them, and a stiff, military kind of attendant waited on them in silence.

After dinner the girls, pleading fatigue, retired, and Tommy and the colonel went outside to enjoy a cigar in the cool beauty of the evening.

Then it was that the lover told his tale and had the joy of being accepted by the father.

"My mind is easy now about one of my girls," the colonel said, "for you are a thorough good fellow and will make her happy, I am sure."

They shook hands, and Tommy, who was really no great smoker, found the narcotic weed more enjoyable to him than it had ever been before.

The Ardinauns and Lady Pearl came down the next afternoon, and Lucy went with the carriage to meet them. Tommy rode to the station with her and walked back.

Pearl looked pale when the train came in, and Lord and Lady Ardinaun fatigued, and both of them showed somnolent tendencies on their

way to Dumbdikes, leaving the younger people to talk together.

"You want a change. Your last rose has left you," said Lucy.

"I am not very well," returned Pearl. "I fancied I saw somebody who—Do you believe in ghosts?"

"Not a bit of it," replied Lucy, "except in the ghosts of Dumbdikes, which is part of the family creed—but why such a question?"

"I thought I saw, just before we came into the station, somebody whom I believed to be in town. He was standing near the railway by the side of a pond, perfectly still, looking away from the train and heedless of it, like one wrapped in all-absorbing thought."

"Is it anybody I know?"

"You must not ask questions about him, Lucy."

"Pearl," said Lucy, still speaking quietly, but with more emphasis, "look at me. What have you left in town besides your roses?"

"Oh! it is not that," faltered Pearl. "I assure you we have said so little—"

"That will do for the present," said Lucy. "You shall tell me all about it to-night when we have sent the old people to bed. I am engaged, and to whom do you think?"

"I am a bad hand at guessing," said Pearl, "and being absorbed in selfish thought I have not noticed any of your admirers."

"Mine is a prosaic affair," replied Lucy. "I am engaged to Tommy Dray—just the husband I want. He adores me—don't laugh, please—and he will let me do just what I please all the days of my life. What a happy couple we shall be together!"

"I liked Mr. Dray," said Pearl. "He is so thoroughly honest. But, Lucy dear, if you saw such a vision as I have seen—for a vision it must be—what would you think of it?"

"That I was very much in love with somebody and was always thinking so much of him that I could conjure up visions of him wherever I went."

Pearl made no rejoinder, and rode the rest of the way in silence. Lord Ardinaun made amends for this by waking up and criticizing the landscape, which he forcibly contrasted with the beauty of Scotland. He was very severe upon the entire absence of hills.

"Hills," said Lucy, "are very pretty to look at, but a bother to climb; so give me a flat country, if you please." For which piece of candour Lord Ardinaun mentally consigned her to the land where foolish people dwell.

There was very little ceremony that night at Dumbdikes and the party in the drawing-room broke up early. Lucy and Lady Pearl went to the former's room, where Meg wanted to come, but was dexterously shut out by her sister and told to go to bed like a good girl.

"I know what you are going to do, then," said Meg, through the keyhole. "You will talk about your DARLINGS, and you are too mean to let me listen—I am ashamed of you."

Then she took herself off in a huff, but consoled herself with the thought that young Claverly of the Guards was expected on the morrow, and went to her couch with a mind at rest and at peace with all the world.

"The night is delightfully warm, and we can sit here," said Lucy. "You can talk as much as you please, for nobody ever walks at this end of the house at night. The view is very pretty, with the wood on the right and the flat land on the left. Don't you think so?"

"Pretty and peaceful," said Lady Pearl, leaning her head upon her hand and surveying the quiet scene before her. "Whose light is that burning yonder?—a mere spark."

"That would be a great fire if you were near it," replied Lucy. "The gipsies' camp is there. Some of their tribe pitch their tents in that spot all the year round. We shall be sure to see some of them before long, and you can have your fortune told."

"My fortune," sighed Lady Pearl.

"Ah! I see," said Lucy, "you are very tired indeed. Now tell me his name, and no equivocation, please."

"Would you have me confess to you that



which I have not wholly confessed to him?" asked Pearl.

"What was the figure like—the figure you saw by the railway?" asked Lucy.

"That of a tall man, with a sad face, one who seems fitted to adorn society, but who walks like one clogged with an invisible chain. He looks like a man who has fatally erred and sees no backward road."

"A famous athlete he might be," insinuated Lucy.

"He is one," replied Pearl.

"And took his degree at Cambridge?"

"Yes."

"How much like Hugh Egerton, the Prince of Melancholy, as they call him," said Lucy, "and I see I have found you out."

"But you will never speak of it?" implored Pearl.

"If I never. I have seen much of Hugh, and I may tell you frankly that I admire him myself. Do not be alarmed. I am not in love with him, nor he with me. I doubt if he even knows my name. All sorts of stories are afloat about your prince, but I say there is nothing in them. He is poor, but he is noble, and for such a man a woman might give up all—friends, position, wealth, name—"

"Lucy!"

"Ay! everything for his love. Oh! what a dismal face. Do not be jealous. I am only uttering the thoughts that are written on yours. If Hugh Egerton beckoned to you to leave all here behind you and go with him, what would you do?"

Pearl was silent.

"Go, of course," said Lucy, "for you are a woman with a passionate soul that hides its strength like a deeply-buried lake of lava, while I am but a poor, flimsy creature with a spring just below the thin crust of my nature, which is ever breaking out here and there and bubbling before the eyes of the world. Oh! Pearl, I tremble for you."

"I tremble for myself," replied Pearl, "and I am very unhappy. It was but a few days ago when I learnt how I loved him, and—I have not seen him since."

"Unless you saw him to-day."

"Impossible; what could he be doing there?"

"I was but jesting, Pearl. I charge that vision to your fancy."

Both were silent for awhile, and Lady Pearl, whose eyes had wandered over the landscape meanwhile, was the first to speak.

"There is another light burning," she said, "feebler than the other, but not so far away. It looks like a light in a window."

"It is to the left of the camp," said Lucy. "That is Gaunt House, the place where Lady Friary died suddenly two months ago."

## CHAPTER IX.

### COME LIVE WITH ME AND BE MY LOVE.

I'm tired of glittering shows  
And the strife of man's display;  
Let us sink to sweet repose  
Where the trailing water flows  
Round some coral-haunted bay.

It was generally understood that Dumbdikes was but another name for Liberty Hall. People were invited there to enjoy themselves, and allowed to do it in their own way.

The colonel did not keep a very expensive staff of servants, and knowing this some of his visitors brought their own and drafted them for the time being into the general service. Young Claverly of the Guards brought his man with him and dismissed him from attending on him during his stay.

"I can dress myself better without you," the young gentleman said, "and at all other times you are a nuisance, so make yourself useful elsewhere and don't let me hear of your skulking."

Claverly's Christian name was Barnet, which his friends had shortened, and to all his little world he was known as Bet Claverly. He was

a great favourite, being as light-hearted and careless as a robin in summer time, and generally supposed to be free from vice. He certainly did not make himself conspicuous by his peccadilloes.

He and Meg were very great friends, and neither of them could quite make up their minds what was to be the end of it. Claverly was living beyond his income, and Meg had no income at all, and a marriage under the circumstances appeared ridiculous.

"It wouldn't do, I suppose, Meg," he said, just before they parted in town.

"Not at all, Bet, dear," she replied; "we must view the blessed state as the infidel does the distant Mecca, a thing from which we are debarred for ever."

"But we can't go on in this way," he urged.

"For the present we can," said hopeful Meg. "Perhaps something may turn up some day, and then you may speak to the colonel."

Claverly was very fond of Meg, and since he made her acquaintance had confounded his folly in getting into debt a thousand times. But debt is a thing having the nature of quicksands—easy to get into but very difficult to get out of.

They made a pretty pair, the guardsman and the handsome girl, as they strolled up and down the front of Dumbdikes the morning after his arrival.

Some of the guests had breakfasted and were wandering about, others were breakfasting, and a few were still in bed.

"So you are in just as great a muddle as ever," said Meg.

"Worse if anything," he replied, "the bills that come in are really appalling. If I sold out I should not be able to meet them, and then what should we start on?"

"It is no use thinking of it," said Meg, lightly, "we shall never start together. I have been thinking of somebody else."

"Oh! come, Meg," he said, with an alarmed look in his sleepy blue eyes, "you are joking."

"Am I?" she replied. "You will see."

"I should cut up awfully rough, Meg."

"I should like to see you rough, Bet. How funny it would be."

"I can be rough maybe if there is occasion to," the guardsman said, quietly. "But what are you going to do to-day?"

"Lucy was thinking of taking her goose to the Cells, and we could go with them. Lady Pearl, you know her—"

"Rather. A woman without a rival."

"Thank you, Bet. I see you are as big a muff as the rest, and believe in soft sadness, but it is no go—I can see that she is sweet upon somebody who doesn't reciprocate, or is shut out from her. Well, we thought of completing the party with her and Sir Charles Friary."

"But why Friary?"

"Because he is a widower of two months' standing only and is a safe man. Pearl declined all other cavaliers."

"Perhaps she is sweet there," said Claverly, twisting his moustache.

"She may be. But shall we go?"

"What and where are the Cells?" asked he.

"Come up here. Now look straight ahead between those two poplars. Can you see a clump of trees or can you not?"

"I can see them, Meg."

"That is called the Ten Acre Wood, and just outside it a very remarkable thing took place some five years ago. A man, while ploughing, suddenly found the ground give way, and he and his horses tumbling about in loose earth. He got out, but one of his horses was killed, for the earth had fallen in to the depth of twenty feet, and being on a level plain the event, to say the least, was phenomenal. Excavations were afterwards made by some scientific enthusiasts, and the remains of a chapel—it was the roof of that which had fallen in—with cells on either side were discovered."

"Deuced odd, Meg."

"So odd that nobody has ever made anything out of it yet. Now, here's Lucy and her own

Tommy, and you had better make up your mind what you will do. We shall walk."

"Oh, I'll go," said Claverly.

A few minutes afterwards Lady Pearl and Sir Charles Friary joined them, and they set off upon the road to the Cells, which lay between the two poplars pointed out by Meg.

While the way was broad they kept together, but by and bye the road narrowed between two dykes, and Sir Charles and Lady Pearl fell back a little, an example soon followed by Tommy Dray and Lucy, and from thenceforth they walked in pairs.

Sir Charles appeared to be in his best mood. He was quiet, with a tinge of sadness which he knew well how to make the most of. Few men could talk better than he, and he strove to make himself agreeable to his companion.

When a handsome man, with undeniable power of fascination, strives to do this he invariably succeeds, and Pearl was soon so far engaged with him that those ahead were forgotten and permitted to go on increasing the space between them, and the Cells lying on the other side of the wood, they were on entering completely shut out from them.

Pearl perceiving it would have hastened on, but he gently detained her.

"It would be a pity to mar *ТАКЕ* pleasure," he said, "they will not miss us."

"Mr. Dray and Lucy are engaged," said Pearl, "but Meg and Mr. Claverly—"

"Are admittedly lovers," he said, "and only wait for Dame Fortune to give them a turn of the wheel to launch out together. I envy them their happiness."

"You must acutely feel the death of Lady Friary," she answered.

He made no answer, and she looked at him in surprise. His face wore a look of perplexity.

"Lady Pearl," he said, after long a pause, "may I confide in you?"

"If any good can come of giving me your confidence," she replied.

"I hope good will come of it," he said. "Lady Friary and I were never suited to each other—our marriage was a mistake. It brought us no happiness."

"I am sorry to hear you say so."

"It is sad to think of it, and I deeply regret that I cannot mourn her loss as I ought. We did not live happily—the proverbial cat-and-dog life was ours. It is not to tell you a long story of my misery," he said, "but to ask your advice. Say that prior to my marriage I loved another—"

"You ought not to have married," said Lady Pearl.

"But she I loved disappeared and was lost to me," he replied, "for ever as I thought, but in the noontide of my marriage misery she came back and my old love was renewed."

"That was a sin," said Pearl.

"True," he said, "but are we not all erring creatures taken hither and thither by the current of our desires? I tried to stem my love, but had not the power. It gathered strength, and is gathering still. I am being borne away Heaven alone knows whither."

The ring of despair in his voice touched Lady Pearl deeply, but she neither saw the point he was arriving at nor had the least inkling of the truth. How could she withhold her pity from him! Her small ungloved hand was laid upon his arm as she looked up at him with eyes brimming with sympathy.

"For such a lot as yours there must surely be some relief," she said.

"Only one," he replied, "and it must come from her. But see how I am, trammelled by the laws of society. My wife but two months dead, I dare not seek her, dare not avow my love—"

"It would have a very objectionable appearance," said Pearl, thoughtfully, "to those who knew not your story. But why should you not wait?"

"She will misinterpret my silence, and she is wooed by others."

"Then make your love known to her—tell her what you have told me, and—"

"Lady Pearl," said Sir Charles, taking her hand in his, "you have given me immeasurable relief and an encouragement I am not worthy of. Can you not guess who it is that I love?"

He had thrown off the mask, and eyes and voice spoke together, and she shrank back from him amazed and terrified. He saw the response and his soul grew angry, but he kept to his point; all was now to be lost or won.

"I have surprised you," he said, "but do not judge me harshly. If I DARE have waited I would—ay! for years. I would have grown grey in anticipation of the joy of calling you my own and never repined. Do not turn from me."

"You must forget me," she said, softly.

"Forget you?" he returned, "never. Bid me hope and for a year I will leave you, or never utter a word that all the world might not hear."

"I cannot give you hope," she said.

"Then I will still persist," he said, "until I have turned your heart to me. I have set my heart upon you and I will not turn away. Pearl—sweet Pearl, I love you."

"Let go my hand, Sir Charles," she said.

"Nay—by the faith of my forefathers," he said, "which I swear by, having no faith of my own, I will not let you go until you promise me that for a year no other shall usurp the throne I seek."

"I cannot promise," said Pearl.

His eyes flashed and his dark skin assumed a deep tint. The demon was being aroused within him, as he saw his hopes fading.

"But you shall," he hissed. "I will not let you go without your word is given. I love you, I cannot live without you, and I have sworn you shall be mine by fair means or foul."

"Would you DARE to resort to violence?" asked Pearl, with all her woman's courage in her eyes.

"Dare?" he said, "I dare ANYTHING—so do not tempt me."

"Let go your hold, Sir Charles."

"No, by Heaven! not until I have culled a kiss from those sweet lips. If I am to lose you it shall be as a woman who dare not—"

All the evil in him was aroused, and in his fury he was ready for any extreme. Drawing her towards him with a force she could not resist, he threw one arm around her and held her fast.

"Now, my darling Pearl," he said, "I have you."

He held her so that she could not escape, and his lips were within an inch of hers when he received a blow on the side of the head that caused him to relax his hold. A second blow sent him sprawling.

"Dastard and scoundrel," cried Hugh Egerton, who had dealt this timely blow and now held the trembling Pearl in his arms, "a dishonour to all manhood, a libel upon the name of gentleman. Do not tremble so, my darling," he continued, addressing Pearl, in a voice softer and sweeter than she had ever heard from him before. "You are safe now."

"How came you here?" she asked, the words escaping her lips mingled with the broken accents of alarm.

"Of that I will tell you anon," he said. "Meanwhile this knave must be dismissed, Sir Charles Friarly."

The baronet, who was sitting up with a confused look upon his face, scowled at him, but the menace his look conveyed was thrown away. He slowly gathered himself up and stood upon his feet, holding to a branch of a tree for support.

"Sir Charles," said Hugh, "you will be wise if you do not linger here."

"So this is my rival," said Sir Charles, "this mysterious beggar, who lives nobody knows where, and has vagabond gipsies for his friends. It is a noble liaison, surely. Lady Pearl, I congratulate you. The ancient name of Blackford is honoured."

"Will you be gone, scoundrel?" cried Hugh, with suppressed passion.

But for Pearl clinging to him he would have rushed upon Sir Charles and punished him further.

"I will go when it suits me," the baronet replied. "You need not mind me, go on with your fooling. It is an old story to me."

"Pearl, let me go," said Hugh, softly.

"No—no," she whispered, "do not quarrel with him. He is a dangerous man."

"Pshaw!" said Hugh, contemptuously. "Do you think I fear him?"

He gently unclasped her hands and leaving her with her hands before her face advanced to within striking distance of Sir Charles, who stood with one hand on his heart.

"I give you five seconds to leave this spot," he said.

"And I will not go in ten, or twenty, or fifty," hissed Sir Charles. "Strike me again at your peril."

Hugh raised his arm, and at the same moment Sir Charles drew his hand from his breast, revealing a revolver in his grasp. Hugh seized him by the wrist and a desperate struggle ensued for the possession of the weapon.

Rage stimulated both, and they were strong men, accustomed to athletic exercise, but Sir Charles was several years the senior and not in such good training. He was thrown and the weapon wrested from his grasp.

"Now," said Hugh, "I give you five seconds more, and if you do not go I will shoot you like a dog."

He was terribly earnest, and Sir Charles, who was in no hurry to give up his life, sprang to his feet, shook his fist angrily in the air, and hurried away.

Hugh adjusted the lock of the revolver so as to avoid accidents and placed it in his pocket. He intended to keep that weapon, as it might be of good service on some future occasion. Taking the hand of the trembling Pearl he put it to his lips and kissed it tenderly.

"Do not be alarmed, dearest," he said; "we are alone."

"Oh, Hugh!" she sobbed, "how deep is the debt I owe you! But tell—what good fortune is it that brings you here?"

"I am living in the neighbourhood," he replied, with a return of the gloom to his face.

"Near here?" exclaimed Pearl.

"Within a mile of this spot."

"Then you must be at Gaunt House?"

"That is owned by Sir Charles Friarly," he said, with a smile. "Do you think I am THERE? The people I am with have nothing in common with you."

"Oh, Hugh!" she said, "what is this dreadful mystery attached to your life?"

"Nothing so dreadful after all. If I could but tell you!" he replied.

"Why not then confide in me?"

"I would," he said, "if the secret were my own alone, but," here a dark cloud settled upon him, "while I have been talking to you I have forgotten something vital, an obstacle in the path of our joy; I am lost to you for ever; our ways in life will be as wide asunder as the poles. When I leave you think of me no more, unless it is as one dead."

"As one dead!" she softly said.

"If my lot had been a different one," he said, holding her hand between his and looking down to hide the agony expressed in his eyes, "I might have sought your love. I can be frank with you now, as this meeting is our last."

"You did not say this when last we met."

"I did not say it, Pearl, because I did not know it."

"Then some fresh bond holds you?"

"A bond which if broken by me would cost me my life. Not that I care for that alone, but I must live on for another."

"Tell me truly, Hugh," said Pearl, with her eyes filled with tears; "is it a woman who holds you?"

"No," he replied; "not in the sense you mean."

"You have never loved another or professed to love her?"

"Never. You are my first love and the very last, Pearl, and the height and depth of that love are too great for me to make clear to you. If I had won your heart—"

"Oh, Hugh!"

She put her hands before her face again and bowed with the anguish that was within her. The colour forsook his cheeks and he trembled as the whole truth became apparent to him.

"You love me, Pearl?"

"Hugh, Hugh! why so unkind to me?"

"Heaven help us both," he muttered, and his trembling hands stole towards her. His arm was about her and he held her close ere he was conscious of the danger of such an act.

"Hitherto I have grieved over my fate," he said, "now I must grieve for yours."

"But must we be ever apart?" she asked.

"As things are now I fear so," he replied. "I can see no break in the clouds ahead. The only home I could offer you is that of a vagabond and outcast; the only companionship beyond my own that I could give you would be that of a people whose very presence is repulsive. Oh, misery!—untold misery. Pearl, I have never kissed you. Let our lips touch but once and then farewell."

"Is there a life you would not share with me?" she asked, raising her eyes to his.

"None," he said.

"If I were poor and in misery, driven into the society of those I loathed, would you desert me?"

"No."

"And what is that which would lead you to cling to me?"

"My love."

"And what should be the dictates of my poor heart?"

"No, no, Pearl," he said, hurriedly; "not for the world, not to save my life or that which is beyond. Ask me anything but THAT. I could not, would not drag you down, although the temptation to have you near almost overwhelms me. No, no; good bye, darling, duty calls me away, and duty bids me leave you."

"For ever?"

"Why should we meet?" he asked, falteringly.

"You will see me again," said Pearl, smiling.

"I have more faith than you."

"But where can we meet?"

"Here, or where you will—once more."

"A thousand times for my sake," he said, "but for yours—never again."

He kissed her fondly and she clung to him with a tender yearning that made him quail before the dark future that lay before him. A few hours before he had thought himself strong in his purpose and ready to go forward on his darkened road; but he had come to a tempting halting place, like a traveller who finds a house with warmth and light midway up an ice-bound mountain.

"If it could be," he said, huskily, "oh! how gladly would I say come, my darling. The pang of having such a joy within my reach and yet unable to grasp it is racking my soul. If I linger longer I shall fall lower than the wretch I have just driven away. He had no trust to break. Pearl, is your faith so strong in me?"

"Oh, Hugh! I would trust you through all," she answered.

He looked into the depths of her beautiful eyes and read her perfect confidence in him. She had no thought of his being caught but what was honourable and true. Of broken vows and forgotten, plighted words she might have heard, but they had no share in her thoughts just then.

Holding her close to him, so close that her breath fanned his cheek, he felt the moral courage of which he had hitherto been so justly proud fast ebbing away. Would it be right for him to let this opportunity slip by—to part from her and see her no more? Would that not be overstraining the spirit of self-sacrifice?





[FALSEHOOD AND TREACHERY.]

## HER BITTER FOE;

OR,

## A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Lost Through Gold," "Strong Temptation,"*

&amp;c., &amp;c.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

KEITH LEARNS ALL.

Never morning wore to evening but some heart did break.

To go back to that time at Norton Castle when Keith showed to Rosalie the withered rose.

"It is all over," he said, simply.

Her heart beat quickly. The moment of her triumph seemed very near, but she was an accomplished actress. Never by word or glance did she show her joy.

She sympathised with Keith as though his sorrow had been her own, and then when they left Norton and went abroad, little by little she let him see her secret and learn that it was for his sake she refused all her noble suitors.

Don't be hard on Keith, reader. He had loved Ethel Devreux as his own soul, but Ethel had forsaken him, she had proved herself utterly false and heartless. Her boasted constancy instead of lasting three years had not endured for as many months. She was lost to him, and he was thrown day by day, hour by hour, into the society of a girl whose beauty had always fascinated him and whom he now knew loved him.

They had not been abroad a week when, standing together one evening by a marble

fountain, Rosalie's dearest dream was fulfilled. Her love, her hero, asked her to be his wife.

You remember how passionately Keith wooed Ethel Devreux; this second proposal was a very different affair.

"Rosalie," said Mr. Jocelyn, simply, "do you think you could be content to accept a man who had been jilted by another girl—you, the queen of beauty and fashion?"

And looking at him with her liquid eyes she had replied that she could be more than content, she should be happy.

The engagement was by some caprice of Rosalie's (a caprice which found an echo in Keith's heart) kept strictly private, only the nearest relations on either side being taken into confidence.

Lord and Lady Jocelyn, who had been greatly piqued by Sir Claude's conduct and bitterly disappointed at Ethel's inconstancy, wrote to Rosalie warmly welcoming her as their future daughter, and Lord Norton openly rejoiced at his grandchild's choice. He wished the marriage to take place at once. Rosalie favoured the wish, but Mrs. Norton was urgent for a little delay, and Keith, by a strange reluctance to put the final barrier between himself and Ethel, sided with her.

The moment he saw that fatal announcement his views changed. Rosalie herself could not have been in more feverish haste for the wedding, and as Lord Norton chanced to be unusually ill, almost despaired of by the physicians, all ceremony was waived, and the ceremony took place without pomp or show at the English church the very morning of Lord Altonby's arrival in the little town.

The moment he saw the bride Jack Tremaine knew he had come in vain.

"Drive on," he said to his coachman, in a hoarse voice.

Arrived at the only hotel of the place, Riano, as the town was called, the marquis had a long debate as to his conduct. He knew in his own mind as surely as though Rosalie had confided in him that from first to last the deception prac-

Take the world as it is and how many men would have hesitated which course to take? Even among great moralists and preachers a saving clause would have been found. "I am but a man," they would have said. "I have not the strength for this hour."

Hugh was no moralist or preacher, unless the sermons he had been in the habit of reading himself made him one, and he was dragging his anchor and bearing for a dangerous coast.

Pearl's head sank upon his shoulder and lay there. Both were silent, but there was the music of birds in the air, and from the grazing grounds beyond the wood there came the tinkling of the sheep-bell and the lowing of herds. A gentle breeze swept across the tree-tops, adding a lower note of harmony, and the loose leaves lying on the ground rustled as the timid rabbit and hare fled by.

The hour, the place, were both love's own, as much as the time when the full moon is high in the heavens and the hot earth sends up its fleecy mists in the cool night air. Cupid indeed seldom slumbers or sleeps; he haunts the river and the dell, glides through the calm, and rides upon the storm, the ruler of so much that is earthly, the master spirit of men and women's hearts.

"Pearl!"

"Hugh!"

It was only sigh for sigh taking the form of names, and again there was a silence, until Hugh gently raised her head and took love's second kiss.

"We cannot part," he said, "or not for ever. If I go from you now we must meet again. I cast all the past and present, except that which concerns you, to the winds, and live for you alone."

Closer and fondly he held her to him, and the birds sang their blithest as they looked down upon them, but high over head above the wood a dark cloud was gathering.

(To be Continued.)

tised on Keith was Rosalie's work. But, on the other hand, she was now Keith's wife. To punish her was to punish him and wreck his life of the faint prospect of happiness it already possessed. Rosalie now bore the name of Jocelyn, any crime of hers would bring dishonour on the race.

"No," thought honest Jack, "he has trouble enough, poor fellow, in losing Ethel, I won't make matters worse by telling him what a thorough-going serpent he has taken to his bosom, but he shall know one thing at least—Ethel was never false. I will prove that to him before I leave Italy."

He waited that day at his hotel. He knew perfectly that if he sent his card in to Keith he should be refused admission. He even questioned the waiters as to the habits of the family at the palazzo, and learned that the ladies seldom came out before noon, but the young signor usually strolled through the town early in the morning.

Directly after breakfast Jack took his hat and strolled into the pleasant square which was the way from Lord Norton's temporary home to the little town.

He was not disappointed; he had hardly been there five minutes when Keith appeared. The marquis played himself immediately in his path. Keith would have passed him with cold contempt, but Jack cried:

"You must listen to me, Jocelyn. I have come from England to correct one of the cruellest falsehoods man's imagination ever forged, and I will not go home with my work undone."

It was Sunday. Most of the Italian population were at mass. The two men had the grove almost to themselves, and Jack poured out his story. He defended himself, he defended Ethel; he withheld nothing of the truth save the fact (as it was to him) of Rosalie's treachery. He allowed Keith to fasten the blame upon Sir Claude. Better that, he thought, than for him to suspect the woman to whom he was bound for all time.

"Do you believe me?" asked the young marquis, when he had finished. "I can give you proofs of my word—one is that your sister has promised, Heaven willing, one day to be my wife."

Keith stood as one broken down by sorrow.

"Altonby, some fiend has been at work to divide us, and I, fool that I was, believed the tales. I am married."

"I know," said Jack, sadly. "I saw you come out of church with your wife on your arm. I travelled night and day after I got your address. I never lost a minute, and I would give half my fortune if only I had been an hour earlier."

The two men shook hands in perfect silence. Before such despair as Keith's, who could speak comfort?

"Two lives are wrecked," said Keith, brokenly. "How can I live on, knowing that Ethel is true, and of my own will and deed I have raised an eternal barrier between us? Poor girl, I have blighted her youth."

"You must make the best of it," said Jack, bluntly. "Ethel is too true to break her heart for another woman's husband. You must try to forget the past and make your wife as happy as you can."

The veins on Keith's forehead stood out like purple cords.

"I must see her again," he cried. "I will break the truth to her myself. If anyone is to break her heart I will be the one to do it."

"This is folly," said Jack, harshly, for he felt that if he showed half the pity he really felt Keith would start for England within the hour. "You have chosen your own path, and you must abide by it. I am Ethel's kinsman, and I will not have her subjected to such an agony as you describe. Do not fear for her; Maude and I will take what care of her human love can."

"Maude and I!" Already the words came glibly from Jack with a certain sense of proud possession.

Listening to them, Keith felt one selfish throb of pleasure. If he had lost Ethel, at least he would never see her Jack's wife.

"You will come and see my wife?" said Keith, as Jack once more held out his hand in token of farewell. "I have had hard thoughts of you, Altonby, but I know now that you are one of the truest friends I ever had."

"I cannot," said Altonby, bluntly. "I never was a good hand at pretty speeches, and I should be worse than ever now. How am I to wish Mrs. Jocelyn all happiness when my every thought is with the poor girl who hoped to fill her place?"

"At least we can part friends?"

"I hope so. I can't forget that you won my cousin's love, and now, through want of faith in her, have wrecked her life. It isn't likely that you and I can ever be very intimate, still, if ever act of mine can serve you I will not shrink from it."

"You say we can never be intimate, and yet you will marry my sister."

"Ah, but Maude was Ethel's sister in all but name long before you thought of marrying Rosalie Norton, and she won't forget that."

So the two men parted. Keith went home to his bride with the wretched consciousness that she was the obstacle he himself had placed between them and happiness.

Jack packed his portmanteau and started for England.

He had been away more than a week when he once more stood on the threshold of Devreux Court. It struck him with a vague fear that all the blinds were lowered, and an unusual calm hung over the place. When Joliffe opened the door his eyes were red with weeping.

"She's gone, my lord," he said, respectfully, "and the master's shut up in the library. I don't think he could feel it more if she had been his daughter, and Miss Ethel's face is enough to make a creature's heart ache. Mrs. Gray was an angel, my lord, if ever there was one."

"She was something more, Joliffe. She was a good, true woman. Where is Miss Ethel?"

Another moment and he was with her, her hands in his; a brother's kiss of greeting on her forehead.

"Oh, Jack, why did you stay away so long? I have wanted you so."

"I have been to Italy."

"To Italy?"

"Dear, you have had a sad time. I never guessed poor Mrs. Gray was so near the end."

"Jack, I want to tell you something. You know how sweet she was, how she loved me, and her whole thoughts were to make me happy?"

"I know all that."

"And yet I had done her the cruellest wrong a girl could. I had won her husband's heart. She was Keith's wife."

"My dear Ethel, you must be dreaming," thinking of the other wife he had seen in the sleepy Italian town.

"No; that is why he went abroad. He never cared for her, and said that while she lived he should never return to England, and she loved him so she thought and thought how to give him his freedom."

"Poor creature!" said Jack, reverently. "I do believe, Ethel, some women are nearly angels."

"So when her sister died last spring she had her buried in the name she went by and wrote to Keith that his wife was dead. Until she heard of our engagement she had no idea she was not doing the very best thing in the world for him."

"Do you think your father knows?"

"She fancied papa had heard a rumour of the marriage and her supposed death, and perhaps thought it too soon for Keith to take a second wife. She said she always loved me for Keith's sake."

"Most women would have hated you."

"Yes, I think she was glad to die, Jack; she said life had been one long pain for the last few years. She begged me to tell Keith the truth when I was his wife. She said he would think more kindly of her perhaps if he knew she had done all she could to set him free, and then I asked her to let me tell you."

Silence long and deep. Jack held her hands

still. His face was graver than she had ever seen it.

"Jack, I am certain something is wrong."

"Yes, dear."

He never attempted to deny it. Jack was as truthful as the day.

"Tell me."

"I cannot," and the young man trembled like an aspen leaf. "Oh! Ethel, what have I done that I who love you should be the person to break your heart?"

"Keith is ill."

"He is perfectly well. I saw him on Sunday."

"He has forgotten me and has asked you to tell me. Make haste, Jack. Tell me all."

"My poor child, he has not forgotten you, if it is any comfort to you to know it. He loves you just as earnestly as when you parted. Poor little Ethel!"

"Go on," huskily.

"There has been treachery at work, child. They told him you were engaged to me; they suppressed his letters to you, and finally, after sending him a faded rose as a token you wished for your freedom, a fictitious advertisement was inserted in the 'Times' announcing your marriage to me."

"And he believed it?"

Jack bowed his head.

"Did you see it, Jack? Was that why you went away so suddenly?"

"Yes. Oh! Ethel, if I could only have got to him sooner. I lost no time when I once found out where he was. I travelled night and day, but, you see, until Thursday I could not get his address."

"And you were too late?"

Surely that was not Ethel's voice.

"My poor child, try to bear it. As I passed the English church he was coming out with his bride on his arm."

"You need not tell me her name, Jack. I am guess."

"Can you, dear?"

"From the moment I saw Rosalie Norton I felt certain she would work me sorrow—great sorrow."

Jack answered not. Poor fellow, he was trying hard to think of something to comfort her.

"Jack, it is she who has done the mischief, she who has separated me from my love."

"I believe so too."

"Does he know it?"

"He knows that you were true. I could not let him suspect whose treachery had divided you."

"I would have had no pity on her."

"No, dear, but remember she is his wife. For all time their lives must be one. Dishonour on her would fall on him now."

"Jack," said his cousin, sadly, "I am very wicked. I never thought of that. He loved me, not her. He will be unhappy enough without knowing the truth."

Jack marvelled at her calm.

"Did you expect me to faint?" she asked him. "I can't. My life is just blighted, dear, that's all."

Blighted! and she not nineteen.

"I could have given him to his wife," murmured the girl. "On Friday as I knelt by her death bed I felt that if she could get well, passionately as I loved him, I could yet be glad for her sake if she tried to win his love, but, Jack, it is cruel work to yield him up to Rosalie."

"He wanted to come," said Lord Altonby, "but I thought it would be too painful."

"Yes, I can only pray now that I may never meet him. I think to see Rosalie on his arm would kill me."

"Shall you give him his wife's message?"

"Not now," slowly. "You forget I only promised to tell him if I became his wife. Jack, is it not strange she died on his wedding day?"

"If she had lived but a few hours longer the marriage would have been illegal."

Ethel shook her head.

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she had once borne the title of his wife. Rosalie might do such a thing; the Devreuxs could not—not even for their love.”

“I must go to your father. Is he much cut up about Mrs. Grey?”

“Yes. We were both with her, and, oh, Jack, she joined our hands and held them in both of hers. Papa seems very sad, but he is very kind too. He asked me just now if I thought Lady Jocelyn would let Maude come and stay with me.”

“Maude is very far from strong,” said Jack, slowly. “It made me so sad to see her, Ethel.”

“Then you have seen her?”

“It was she who gave me her brother’s address.”

“And she knows?”

“She knows by this time.”

“Maude will be true to me. She will love me through it all, even though I can never be her sister really.”

“Yes, you can,” said Jack, “though not in the way you once thought. If I am your brother my wife will be your sister. It is cruel to talk of my own happiness at such a time, but yet I think you will like to know that Maude has promised to be my wife.”

Two days later the remains of the house-keeper were interred in the village churchyard. Sir Claude chose the grave, a lovely spot beneath a spreading elm, and he and Lord Altonby followed the coffin as chief mourners. Dr. Moreton, busy as a village practitioner often is, found time to attend the funeral, and not one of the Court servants was missing—most of them had red eyes.

“I am going to keep house now, Joliffe,” said Ethel to the old retainer the next day. “I don’t think we could any of us bear a stranger here.”

Sir Claude’s manner to his daughter altered perceptibly. Perhaps he noticed the change Keith Jocelyn’s marriage, now a public fact, had made in her. Certain it was he went to the Manor and had a long interview with the earl and countess. He did not exactly ask their pardon, but he begged as a favour that the old friendship might be renewed, and as a pledge of it Maude pay a long visit at Devreux Court.

Neither Lord nor Lady Jocelyn felt guiltless. If Sir Claude had been harsh they were to blame for so readily believing Ethel fickle; besides, Keith’s letters were not happy ones, and they knew that his heart was not in his marriage.

Ethel was sinned against, not sinning, so they were quite ready to take her to their heart again. Lady Jocelyn proposed that she should come to the Manor, but Sir Claude refused.

“I cannot spare her. Be generous, Lady Jocelyn, and lend us your daughter. She ought to learn to know the place that will one day be her own.”

Maude blushed.

“I know you wanted Ethel to marry Jack,” she said, simply; “but you will try to forgive me for loving him, won’t you?”

Sir Claude promised with courtly grace, and assured her that he could have desired no fairer mistress for his fine old home than the bride his heir had chosen, and there in the twilight of the October afternoon he and Maude journeyed to Devreux, and the friends met once again.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### CLEANSING FIRES.

With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.

Lord and Lady Jocelyn were disappointed when their son refused to return home for Christmas. For many years they had had to spend the festival without him, but they had hoped this time that he would come to them with his wife.

Keith did not write fully. He was never a good correspondent; all he said was that Rosalie preferred to remain in Italy. She had never recovered the shock of her grandfather’s death,

and did not care to return to the country she had last visited with him.

Truly the married life of Mr. and Mr. Jocelyn had not commenced propitiously. You know the revelations made to Keith the day after his wedding. Poor fellow, he did his best, he struggled manfully to hide from his wife that she had never been his real choice; nay, more than that, he passionately loved another, but he was not used to deception and the task was a cruel one. Then before they had been married a month Lord Norton died. His daughter-in-law returned to England and the young couple were left alone.

Lady Norton—she had elected to be called by the title which was hers on her grandfather’s death—was very far from being a happy woman. She had sinned deeply to become Keith’s wife; she had conquered all difficulties, but she was not triumphant. Before she had been his wife a week she knew that in one part of the struggle she had failed—she had not her husband’s heart. He had no more love for her than in the days when he was still engaged to Ethel Devreux. She was his wife, that much she had gained; she had separated him from Ethel, but she could not make him happy. He would sit for hours without speaking a word to her; his tone never softened, his smile never came for her as in the old days for Ethel.

“One might as well live with a statue,” said Lady Norton, indignantly, one day. “Keith, why don’t you speak to me?”

“I have nothing to say, Rosalie.”

She bent over him until the waves of her perfumed hair almost swept his face.

“Keith!”

He turned half wearily; there was no caress in his manner.

“Do you know how you are altered? No one would take you for the same man who pulled me out of the river one little year ago.”

“Would they not?”

“Keith,” and her voice was full of a jealous fury, “you are thinking of Ethel Devreux. It is love for her that has changed you so. I am your wife, but you care more for her little finger than for my whole body.”

It was true; he could not deny it.

“You knew I loved her,” he said, in half excuse. “You were content to marry me, knowing it. I never deceived you about her, Rosalie.”

“But I thought you would forget.”

“My dear,” he said, sadly, “you cannot wish for me to do so more than I do; but unfortunately we are not good at forgetting.”

“She has always stood in my way, always.”

“Gently. Reproach me as much as you like, but remember I will hear no word against Miss Devreux.”

“What is she that she should wreck my life?”

“What are you that you should have wrecked hers?” Keith might have asked, but he restrained his temper and kept silent.

“I always hated her, from the moment I saw her a child, with a face like a wax doll’s.”

A sudden light broke upon Keith.

“Do you mean that you knew Miss Devreux before last season?”

“I knew her long ago before I was Lord Norton’s grandchild. She was a pupil at the school where I was a half teacher. She treated me as the dust beneath her feet, and I swore then to be revenged upon her. I have kept my oath. You may not love me; you may think me a burden and an encumbrance, but you cannot alter the fact I am your wife, and while I live Ethel Devreux can be nothing to you.”

Keith, who was generally chivalrous as a knight in his treatment of women—Keith, I say, seized his wife’s arm and held it so tightly that the marks of his fingers showed upon her delicate flesh.

“Good God! Rosalie, what would you have me believe?”

“What you please.”

“Do you know that your words imply you separated me from Miss Devreux? I knew there was treachery at work. Someone suppressed my letters to her, someone sent me a

token purporting to be hers, but, by Heaven! I never thought you could be guilty.”

“I was,” replied Lady Norton, desperately, “if you can call it guilt. I loved you, I love you still, though you have done your best to kill my love since our marriage. I loved you, I repeat, and I hated her.”

Keith paced up and down the room like a wild beast that cannot rest.

“You have said too little or too much,” he rejoined, at last. “If there is ever to be peace again between us you had better tell me everything at once.”

“Do you know where you first saw me? Well, I loved you from that moment, and I believed—poor simple girl that I was—that you loved me.”

“It was at Richmond. I remember perfectly.”

“It was not at Richmond.”

Keith looked at his wife with blank astonishment written upon every feature.

“Have you forgotten the gambler of Southvale, Keith? the girl whose story you once related to me, his daughter, Julie D’Arcy, to whom you tried to give thoughts above her position?”

“Yes,” still not understanding, “I remember.”

“Well, you made a great mistake. That girl mistook pity for love. Your image was rooted in her heart. She lived but for one thing, the hope of seeing you again. She did see you again, but things were altered then. Instead of the gambler’s daughter she was the acknowledged heiress of an English peer.”

“What would you say?”

“I was christened Rosalie Julie. My father was Julius Lester. In his poorer days he called himself D’Arcy to escape the knowledge of his former friends. I dropped both names when I came to my grandfather and bore his by his own wish.”

“And you loved me even then?”

“I loved you! I resolved I would win your heart. Later on, when I discovered my only rival was the girl I hated, I worked with redoubled zeal.”

“And it was you who divided us?”

“I did more than that. I saw Sir Claude Devreux, and made him promise for my mother’s sake—he had been her lover—that he would never give his consent to your marriage with his daughter. I felt that if once you were parted for a time the rest would be easy.”

“Are you a fiend in human form?” asked Keith, looking at her with eyes of horror. “What wrong had I done you that you should injure me so cruelly?”

“You had done none. She had slighted me and scorned me. I had sworn vengeance on her, and that I would be her Bitter Foe. I think I have kept my word.”

And this woman, this fury, was his wife. To her the law bound him so long as they both should live. And he had brought it all upon himself. There had been no persuasion. Of his own free will he had asked Rosalie to be his wife. She was standing before him more beautiful than ever, only with the charm of a panther or some other savage beast rather than of woman.

“How could you,” he asked her, “how could you stoop so low? You might have married anyone. The Count de Rossi, who died the other day, worshipped you; many another man did the same.”

“I know. Carlos died for me. He told me the day which saw me married to another would break his heart. He never held up his head after our wedding.”

Keith groaned.

“I never loved you,” he said, plainly. “Since we are speaking openly I may as well let you know that. In the days of poverty you have recalled I pitied you. When I met you last year I admired you intensely, your beauty exercised a strange, nameless fascination over me, but even if I had not met Ethel I should never have loved you.”

“I have worked hard for your love,” she pleaded, all anger dying out of her voice and

deep tenderness taking its place. "I have plotted and planned and sinned to gain it. It ought to be mine at last."

"And you think it could be, knowing what I do of your conduct?"

"Yes," she replied, firmly, "knowing even that. All I did I did for love of you."

Keith sighed, and the March wind whistled sadly outside, as though to re-echo the sigh.

Rosalie made one more effort. She raised her splendid eyes to Keith's full of a new light—a strange gentleness.

"You will love me soon," she whispered. "You will love me for another's sake. I may have sinned bitterly, but you will forgive me when I am the mother of your child."

In the soft, sweet sunshine of early spring—an April day, when all nature seemed at its best and brightest, there was a wedding at the village church of Jocelyn, and the fair young daughter of the noble house was united to the man whom she loved so fondly and so well.

It was a very pretty wedding, but, by the bride's express desire, a very quiet one. Only tried and trusted friends were present, and for attendant maiden only the girl she had loved from childhood. The earl and countess looked on well pleased at their daughter's choice.

Sir Geoffrey and Lady Hamilton, with their little children, and Sir Claude Devreux, still with a crape band upon his hat, were guests; but Maude's brother was not there, and Lady Jocelyn's eyes grew a little dim at the breakfast as they wandered from the fair, sweet face of Ethel Devreux to a picture of Keith which hung upon the wall.

She was wondering if time would ever right the wrong and bring Keith home happy with his wife and forgetful of that episode of only a year ago. Looking at Ethel's lovely face she feared time had a difficult task.

Lord and Lady Allonby left for their country seat, and it was a promise that as soon as they returned from their honeymoon Ethel should join them in London and spend her second season under the chaperonage of the youthful marchioness.

In vain Ethel had tried to evade her friend's request.

"I shall never marry, Maude, and would rather stay at Devreux Court with papa," she had protested, as she helped Maude to exchange her white silk and orange blossoms for a quieter travelling dress.

"Ethel, no one ever refuses a bride anything upon her wedding day, and I have set my heart on this—so promise me."

She went away happier for the promise, but all the same the sadness of Ethel's sweet face was the one cloud of her bliss.

"It seems so wrong of me, Jack," she whispered, when they were comfortably settled in their reserved coupé.

"My darling, you never did a wrong in your life."

"But I have married you, Jack, and Ethel is all alone. It doesn't seem right."

Lord Allonby kissed his wife.

"Ethel would never have looked at me, and, Maude, don't you remember I told you once before, first love was not always the strongest, and, darling, you are dearer to me than my cousin ever was."

"I wish Keith would have come to our wedding, Jack."

"Then you would not have had Ethel."

"Jack, don't you think she will ever forget?"

"I don't think she will ever marry anyone else, dear, and I am sure she will never care to meet your brother."

"It is so hard," cried Maude, with a sigh.

"Keith cannot keep abroad all his life."

"I think Lady Norton objects to return to England."

They spent a very happy honeymoon. This is often a critical time, when young people find out their mistakes, if they have made any, but no such awakening came to Maude or her husband. They returned to London more in love

with each other than ever, and Ethel was delighted that her cousin had forgotten his old fancy for her and was happy at last.

Letters from Keith grew few and short until at last they ceased altogether, and his family only heard incidentally that he was travelling on the Continent with his wife.

It was in August, while Ethel was playing hostess to the Allonbys at Devreux Court, that the event happened which Rosalie had said would gain for her her husband's love. In a quaint old German village was born the heir to the grand old name of Jocelyn.

"It is a boy, sir," said the English maid, who had accompanied Rosalie in her wanderings.

Keith sighed.

The child looked so fragile that its being of the nobler sex seemed to him to matter little then, and three days later it seemed to matter less. Then, indeed, all else was forgotten in anxiety for the mother's life.

It was of no avail. Physicians, English and German, gathered round the bed, but they were powerless to save Keith Jocelyn's wife.

"I am dying," she cried, raising herself feebly on her pillows. "Oh! Keith, is it quite true?"

"I'm afraid so," he said, huskily. "My poor wife! I would save you if I could."

"Send them all away," she pleaded. "I want to speak to you. Quick! before I am too weak."

One by one the attendants went out and left the husband and wife alone.

"I am dying," repeated Rosalie, slowly, "and you will marry Ethel Devreux. I see now how wicked I was to try to prevent it; but, oh! Keith, I loved you so."

Beautiful even in her peril she looked as she lay there white and colourless as her pillows.

Keith stooped to kiss her.

"My dear Rosalie, do not think about the past. You loved me. I will only remember that."

"And my child," she pleaded, the mother-love giving her strength. "Oh! Keith, you will love him—won't you? Tell Ethel I know I wronged her, but I pray her with my last breath to be tender to my boy."

And with those words, her hand clasped in her husband's, a look of undying love upon her face, the woman who had sinned so deeply for his sake passed to her last account.

The grass was green on Magdalen's grave, the summer flowers bloomed there for the third time, when Ethel Devreux walked in the pleasant gardens of Jocelyn Manor, a little, toddling child at her side—a tiny boy of two, the pride and hope of his grandparents' heart—Reginald, Lord Norton.

"Papa will come home soon, Reggie," said Ethel, as they sauntered on. "You want him badly, don't you, Reggie? If you were a big boy and could write we would send a letter to papa asking him to make haste home."

The baby gave a little laugh expressive of assent and trotted off to join his nurse.

Ethel turned slowly back to the house to find herself at the drawing-room door, face to face with her lover of other days.

"Keith!"

"Ethel!"

That was all in words, but his eyes asked a question, which was answered. He threw one arm round her and whispered, fondly:

"You will really come to me after all?"

With a tear in her eye and a smile on her lip she answered him, and before the golden cord was all cut she became Keith Jocelyn's wife.

His wife, the same beautiful girl he had loved and lost; but with a difference, too, that Ethel had been wayward and capricious, jealous even—in her love; but this one had profited by the example of Magdalen's self-sacrifice, which she whispered to Keith on the evening of their wedding day. Jealousy had no part in her heart; but she was just and kind in every relation of life, a constant proof of which was her tender love for the child of HER BITTER FOE.

[THE END.]

## MISCELLANEOUS.

It is intended to make the Parliamentary Opposition Fish Dinner, which has been initiated by Baron Henry de Worms, a permanent institution.

THE practice of keeping up an incessant chatter whilst artistes are performing at private entertainments received a striking rebuke a few evenings since. Madame Sembrich was executing one of her most delicious morceaux before a private audience, when, finding that the interruptions from conversation had exceeded legitimate bounds, she stopped, and the following day returned the fee she had received from her patron. This high-spirited example might often be advantageously imitated.

A BRITISH scientist has been producing what he calls composite portraits by blending a number of faces pictured upon magic-lantern slides, and carefully placed with the features coming together. In every instance the idealised portrait was better looking than the faces from which it is composed, which seems to indicate that—speaking paradoxically—the average face is finer than the face of the average.

A NEW game is to be introduced. It is called eye peeping, and the fun consists in trying to guess the unknown owner of an eye which is shown to the spectators through a hole in the curtain.

It is curious to learn there are only two Tories in the House of Commons, namely Mr. Warton and Mr. Newdegate. It is stated in Dodd. The members of the Opposition, as a rule, describe themselves as Conservatives. Only the two members named, in describing their political faith, retain the old name of Tory, which dates so far back as to be of Celtic origin.

THE Cobden Club has received a great accession of strength by the admission of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P., to the executive committee.

BEFORE dipping a new pen into ink thrust it into a fresh-cut potato, and the ink will never cling. When the pen is thickly gummed with dried ink, a few thrusts will clean it perfectly. When not in use, some accountants leave their pens sticking into a potato kept on the desk for the purpose.

THE San Francisco aerial ship, the *Æroplane*, which was to have commenced its flight some time since, will, we are informed, not fly till October next. In the meantime the company is perfecting its arrangements.

AMONG the novelties in jewellery already introduced for the coming season in Paris is a gold net for the hair, formed of fine chains and edged with minute gold balls. This net is intended to be confined with jewelled pins, or may be bordered with diamonds or pearls as the possessor's fancy may dictate.

A CURIOUS, or, as some would say, a piquant case, will shortly come before the Tribunal of the Seine. A Spanish lady, nearly related to General Martinez Campos, will bring a suit for nullity of marriage, on the ground that in marrying she supposed that she was being united to a person of a different sex from her own.

## TRUE TILL DEATH;

OR,

## A FAILURE OF JUSTICE.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

Who knows nothing base  
Fears nothing known.

THE deep-voiced bell of Hartford church tolled heavily, and a curious crowd lined the road leading from Mrs. Merton's cottage to the churchyard, and soon from its doors there issued a sombre procession.

They were stone to the villagers' stitions away, on which and followed all the woe.

Under the tomb of Dr. afterwards on which w

Widow

But no k no eye wep self, and to

She was for the sad not an inh forgotten her head.

But the everyone's against her bring them many a p friends in were never anxiously sizes.

With a el gates of Ya half-fainting corridors to trial should Could it half believe it all a hide

Ah, if she gone out or to see the instantly to the moor an set clouds, above in the swamp her ears, a sighing of plantation.

And then again the fi —of Dennin dead—and as it lay wi to the fair grass, with wound in moon glitte bosom.

She seen could have trolled her bed in her

Night ca She strove would die made up— sad, so terr

She thou been fixed think of the greedily or die.

To die! To her it and happie to be brou King of Tr heart quail

To die! the solid es her feet!

And she throat and "It will

"Two min and with m And then he would b



They were bearing the body of Eleanor Vanstone to the grave prepared for it, and the villagers regarded the coffin with almost superstitious awe as it passed, covered with a velvet pall, on which was laid wreaths of white flowers, and followed by a long row of decorous mourners, and all the undertaker's pomp and pageantry of woe.

Under the great elm trees, not far from the tomb of Daniel Ray, they laid her, and shortly afterwards a marble slab was placed over her, on which was inscribed in gilt letters:

To the memory of  
ELEANOR LOLA,  
Widow of Dennis Vanstone, of Stoneyvale.

But no kind hand placed flowers on her tomb, no eye wept for her loss. She had lived for herself, and to forward her own selfish ends alone, and now no human being mourned her loss.

She was missed by none, and had it not been for the sad circumstances of her tragical death, not an inhabitant of Hartford but would have forgotten her ere a week had passed over their heads.

But the remembrance of Hilda was fresh in everyone's heart, and, in spite of the evidence against her, few of the Hartford people could bring themselves to believe in her guilt, and many a prayer was breathed by her humble friends in the village, where her good works were never forgotten, and all looked forward anxiously to the result of the coming assizes.

With a shiver of horror Hilda heard the great gates of Yarborough Jail close behind her, and, half-fainting, she was led along the dismal stone corridors to the cell she was to occupy till her trial should be over.

Could it all be true? And for a moment she half believed she would presently awake and find it all a hideous dream.

Ah, if she could but so awake! Why had she gone out on the moor that evening? Yes, it was to see the sun set. She remembered well, and instantly there rose before her the picture of the moor and the dull, fading crimson of the sunset clouds, with the crescent moon riding high above in the zenith, and the waving rushes in the swamp, and the cry of the curlew rang in her ears, and she could almost hear the low sighing of the wind through the fir trees in the plantation.

And then, with a shudder, she saw before her again the flying, horror-stricken figure of Dennis—of Dennis, whom she had mourned for as one dead—and saw the corpse of Eleanor Vanstone as it lay with the white, terrified face upturned to the faintly shining stars on the soft, short grass, with the blood streaming from the gaping wound in the throat and the pale rays of the moon glittering on the broken knife-blade in its bosom.

She seemed to see it all again before her, and could have screamed in very agony, but she controlled herself and fell heavily on to the narrow bed in the corner of the cell.

Night came—what a night of dread to Hilda. She strove for peace and calm, but in vain. She would die for him—yes, to that her mind was made up—but she was young, and to die was so sad, so terrible—and to die such a death!

She thought of the hundred eyes that had been fixed on her that day, and shuddered to think of the thousands that would be turned greedily on her when she should be led forth to die.

To die! She had never been afraid of death. To her it was but a passage to a far brighter and happier state of existence, but it was hard to be brought so suddenly face to face with the King of Terrors, and even her brave, innocent heart quailed for a moment before him.

To die! to feel the cruel rope round her neck, the solid earth, as it were, giving way beneath her feet!

And she placed her slender fingers round her throat and shivered at their feeble pressure.

"It will be over soon—over soon," she thought. "Two minutes, perhaps less, and I shall be dead and with my father."

And then the thought of her father and what he would be suffering if he knew of her situation

filled her mind, and the tears came into her eyes and she wept long and bitterly.

Tears seemed to bring a relief to her overcharged brain and aching heart, and in an hour or two more she was sleeping quietly on the hard couch prepared for her in the corner of her cell.

The days passed wearily on—one—two—three long days. Hilda felt as if a month had gone by since she set foot in Yarborough Jail, and she began to fear that her friends had forgotten her, or that she was not to be allowed to see anyone. Perhaps it might be against the prison rules, she thought, sorrowfully; and her heart sank within her.

The fourth morning, however, the door of her cell was opened, and Dr. Charnock, accompanied by Margery, entered. The old servant could scarcely speak for tears, and the doctor was scarcely less agitated, but Hilda was strangely calm.

"My darling! my darling!" was all poor Margery could sob, as she held Hilda in her embrace.

"Don't cry, Margery," she replied, as she gave her hand with a sweet, sad smile to Dr. Charnock. "How good of you to come and see me, doctor," she said.

The doctor took her hand, and his voice trembled with emotion as he spoke.

"How are you, my dear Miss Ray? This dismal place, though, is enough to make anyone ill, so I should not ask; but, please God, you will not have much longer of it after the twenty-sixth."

Hilda shook her head sadly.

"No, not much of it after then, doctor," she said, in so peculiar a tone that Doctor Charnock looked at her inquiringly.

"No," he replied, "we'll have you back soon after that, Miss Ray."

"Yes," cried Margery, "the wretches! they are bound to let you go after the trial, dear."

Hilda smiled.

"Well, dear, if I go, or wherever I go, you know I am innocent of this—this—of what they accuse me of?"

And her voice trembled, and she looked imploringly from one to the other.

"Miss Hilda, my own dear young lady!" cried Margery, in astonishment. "To ask me if I believe you to have done such a deed! Never! No, not for all the knives that ever were made."

"Ah! that knife," muttered Hilda. "And you, Dr. Charnock?" she added.

"I, Miss Ray! I know there is a terrible mistake somewhere, and look forward with confidence to its being cleared up," he replied.

There was a pause.

"You are more hopeful than I am, doctor," she said, sadly. "I fear—I know this mistake will never be cleared up. I shall be condemned."

A blank silence fell on her visitors.

"Ah! you are naturally, most naturally, despondent, my child," said the doctor. "Who would not be, shut up in such a den as this?"

And he looked around in disgust, whilst Margery turned white and trembled from head to foot at Hilda's words.

"Don't speak so—don't look like that, Miss Hilda," she said, imploringly. "Ye can't believe they would hang you when you are innocent," she whispered, in horrified tones.

"Yes, I am innocent, Margery, but for all that it looks as if I had done it. I! Oh, God! fancy my doing such a thing. Ah! I see her before me now with the blood all over her neck and bosom. It seems as if my hands would never be clean again, Margery."

And she looked searchingly at her little white palms, and then laying her head on Margery's shoulder she talked to her of her home and friends till the warder came to tell them time was up and they must leave her.

"Good bye, my dear Miss Hilda. Keep a stout heart. Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Leonard will be with you to-morrow. Hope the best," said Dr. Charnock, at parting.

"God bless ye, my child," sobbed Margery, "and send ye back to us."

"Amen," said Hilda, solemnly; "but, Margery, don't deceive yourself with false hopes—there—there—then—I'll, not say it if it hurts you," she added, as the good woman looked imploringly at her, and she kissed her again, and in a moment more was alone.

Mr. Leonard had done his best with the case in hand that he could manage—he had employed the services of the sharpest of detectives he knew; he had inquired, searched, questioned, but had hit on nothing new, nothing to give him a clue to the real perpetrator of the Hartford murder, which was rapidly growing to be a cause célèbre. The papers were full of it, and party spirit ran very high, one side declaring that no further proof was needed, that the evidence was clear, the motive for the murder still clearer, and that Hilda Ray was undoubtedly the guilty party; the other dwelling strongly on the fallibility of circumstantial evidence, and pointing out how unlikely it was that a person of Hilda Ray's known character should be guilty of such a crime, and to tell the truth the great lawyer himself was puzzled and hardly knew which view of the matter to take.

In company with Mr. Jenkins he drove over to Yarborough Jail to have his first interview with his client, and as his eyes fell on her sweet, pure face and open brow, deceptive as he knew appearances to be, he felt that the girl before him was the victim of some extraordinary concatenation of circumstances and could never have been guilty of the crime of which she was accused.

Seating himself beside the small, bare table in the cell he began to question Hilda carefully on the events of that terrible evening when she had been found beside Eleanor Vanstone's dead body.

Her answers were invariably straightforward, but the sharp lawyer could not help suspecting, from a certain reserve in her manner, that there was a something she was hiding from him. Again and again he implored her to be perfectly open and to tell him everything that had occurred.

"Do not hide even the smallest incident from me, my dear Miss Ray," he entreated. "Often and often a very small thing—so small that to an unpractised eye it may appear unworthy of mention—when viewed by an experienced lawyer, accustomed to deal with intricate cases, lets in a flood of light on a difficult question. You must hide nothing from me. What appears not worth mention to you may be really of the greatest importance to us."

Hilda looked at him with grave, melancholy eyes.

"I have told you just what happened, sir," she answered.

"And you saw no one about on the moor—the man at the cottage and his friend, for instance, who say they followed you towards the moor—could they have—"

"What, George Parks and his friend?" interrupted Hilda, eagerly. "Oh, they are both good, honest men. No, I never saw them. I heard Parks come to the door as I passed and he spoke to someone, but I never even turned my head. I was thinking of other things."

"Thinking of what especially?" asked the lawyer.

"Of—of Mr. Vanstone," replied Hilda.

"Ah! Mr. Vanstone, who was drowned—her husband," said he.

"Yes," replied Hilda, in a strange, choked voice, "of him."

"And he was drowned a fortnight before this took place; dear me, how singular," and Mr. Leonard shook his head.

Hilda was silent.

"You knew of his death, of course?" he said.

"I had read the account of the wreck," she replied, her colour coming and going. Then noticing the eyes of the lawyer fixed on her observantly, she added: "Why do you ask me?"

"For the reasons I gave you just now," he replied. "Often even in casual conversation a word is dropped that gives a clue to a mystery that has baffled one's wits for many a day. Don't you see that if any person, any tramp or

stranger, for instance, had been about the place by you, there would arise the probability that he or she had been guilty of the crime?"

Hilda nodded, and he went on:

"But you say you saw no one?"

"I saw no one from the time I left the farm till I found the body on the moor," she answered.

"And then?" he asked.

"Then," she paused. "Ah! it is all so indistinct," she murmured, "but—but I remember the policeman leading me away from the place to the station."

The lawyer sighed. The suspicion he had formed that she was hiding something grew on him, and in spite of her seemingly straightforward replies there was something in the tone of her voice and the changing colour on her cheek when he spoke of the probability of a third person being implicated that made him exceedingly doubtful as to their conveying the whole truth, though as far as they went he had little doubt of their being perfectly truthful.

He tried to lead her to admit, to entrap her almost into an admission of having seen some other person on the moor, but in vain, and at last he turned to her solemnly and entreated her again to keep nothing from him.

"My dear Miss Ray, forgive me," he said, "if I again implore you to tell the whole truth, for I feel certain there is something you are concealing from me. Remember what I have told you. Remember what is at stake—your life, Miss Ray, or at least your liberty for life."

Hilda started and shuddered. Penal servitude! She had never thought of that, and the idea made her tremble.

"Tell me, I implore you," he continued, "who was on the moor beside yourself when the murder was committed?"

For a moment Hilda's face turned a ghastly white, and then the blood dyed her brow, neck and bosom, and firmly, almost fiercely, she replied:

"I was alone."

Mr. Leonard looked at her with a puzzled air.

"She is either saying this to screen another, or—but no, she cannot have done it. Well, my dear young lady," he continued, aloud, with a sigh and a shrug of his shoulders, "if that is the case I will say no more to you on that head. It is a pity you did not see anyone, I must say. But enough of that. Tell me now about the knife. How long ago did you lose it?"

"I never missed it. I never knew it was gone," faltered Hilda, "till I saw it in the hands of the coroner. I did not imagine or dream that it was my knife that had killed her."

"Had you ever lent your knife to anyone? Was anyone else in the habit of using it?" he demanded.

Hilda shook her head.

"Never," she replied, firmly.

"When did you last use it?" he asked.

"About a fortnight before the murder, as Margery said. I had it in the garden," she answered.

"And you did not miss it during the last fortnight?" he asked.

"No, I had so much else to think of," she replied, with a sigh. "I quite remember bringing the basket and my hat in from the garden, and I imagined the knife to be with them in the green-house. I never missed it."

"Who gave it to you?" he asked, suddenly, after a pause, during which he made some notes in a pocket-book, and he looked at her steadily.

"Mr. Vanstone," she replied, and her lips quivered as she pronounced his name. "Mr. Vanstone—years ago," she added, in a soft, low voice.

"It is strange it should have been taken without your missing it?" he said.

"As I told you," replied Hilda, calmly, "so many things happened just then I did not remark it, as I daresay I might at any other time."

"So many things happened! But what things?" he asked.

"Mr. Vanstone's departure; Mrs. Morton's death, and then the shipwreck," she replied, and sighed heavily. "I fear I can't help you much, Mr. Leonard," she said, "I can only repeat what you know already, you see. I cannot give you any fresh information. All that could be told was told at the coroner's inquest. Everyone spoke the truth there, and yet I was condemned."

And the tears came into her eyes.

"Miss Ray," said the lawyer, making a last effort, "there was someone else on the moor, and you know it. For Heaven's sake tell me who it was and save yourself from a horrible fate."

But Hilda drew herself up proudly, and fixing her eyes almost indignantly on Mr. Leonard, replied for the second time:

"I was alone."

And turning away her head she buried her face in her hands and sobbed bitterly.

The lawyer looked on pityingly.

"Poor soul! poor soul!" he thought, "guilty I pity her, and if innocent, as I verily believe, how much more do I compassionate her. It will go hard with her, and I shall be able to do but little with the jury I fear, who will only see the evidence laid before them, and never take into consideration the utter improbability of a girl like her committing such a crime. No, unless we can hunt up fresh evidence, or she will herself give us a clue, I don't see that our side has a chance."

"Good God, my dear sir," cried Colonel Morgan, when Mr. Leonard imparted to him the result of his conference with Hilda, "do you mean to say you think her case is hopeless?"

"Almost, colonel. A jury can but form a decision by looking at the evidence before them, and the circumstantial evidence is very strong against her. Poor girl, I declare I never was so upset in my life before. Has no one any influence over her to induce her to speak out, for I'll stake my existence there is something behind all this?"

And long and anxiously they talked over the matter together, but no light came to them, and day after day passed on and the assizes were at hand, and yet the Hartford murder was enshrouded in the same mystery as ever to the friends of the accused, whilst to those who believed her guilty, as day followed day and nothing was discovered to prove her innocence, her guilt appeared confirmed.

As to Hilda herself her resolve to be silent was only strengthened. Mr. Leonard's words had thoroughly frightened her, and she lived in hourly terror that by some unfortunate means the fact of Dennis having escaped from the Bertha would be discovered; that he would be suspected, traced and captured, and the punishment she was so willing to bear for him would fall on his own shoulders.

Had her words or manner led the lawyer to suspect anything? Yes, she must have said something to arouse his suspicions, or her looks must have betrayed her.

She would speak no more to anyone on the subject. She was prepared to die. She felt certain sentence of death would be passed on her. She was ready and willing to give up her life to save Dennis.

Why should she trouble about her defence? She would henceforth be silent and refuse to answer any question whatever concerning the events of that terrible evening.

In her lonely, isolated condition the new idea, the new terror on Dennis's account that filled her soul, speedily took full possession of her. Her fancy conjured up a thousand ways in which Dennis's existence might have become known, and a silent dread filled her breast, a gnawing anxiety that he might even now be flying for his life from the reach of the detectives.

She would shiver with horror when she thought of it, and her dreams by night were filled with ghastly pictures of Dennis, dragged, pale and haggard, into her presence and reproaching her with being his betrayer.

So at the next visit Mr. Leonard paid her she turned a deaf ear to his questionings.

"I have told you all I can, sir," she said, sweetly but firmly. "What is the use of repeating it again? I can tell you no more. I thank you a thousand times for trying to help me, but I feel it is useless. It is beyond the power of anyone to aid me now; nothing can be done to save me. Ask me no more questions, sir, I pray; let my last days be days of peace at least. I will talk of the past no more. Do not think me ungrateful, but believe me, that I cannot speak of it."

And she kept her word. In vain they tried to induce her to speak of the murder. She was firm and refused to enter again into any discussion on the matter.

## CHAPTER XIX.

And if to death my days must run,  
Oh, mighty Heaven, thy will be done.

EARLY in the morning, on the first day of the assizes, a crowd assembled around the gates of Yarborough Jail and at the court, for the Hartford murder case was to be tried, and the public mind was filled with excitement and expectation. The days had passed without any fresh light having been shed on the mystery, and now public opinion was decidedly against Hilda, and it was generally supposed that in a fit of passion, roused probably by some taunting remark from her victim, she had struck the fatal blows that laid her dead at her feet.

Since Mr. Leonard's first visit to the jail Hilda had maintained a resolute silence on the subject of the crime. He had tried in vain to induce her to talk of it again, to repeat to him again her story of all that had passed on that evening. She was dumb, and firmly though sweetly declined to say a word more on the subject, and it was with a sad heart and with but little hope for his client that the lawyer rose on the twenty-sixth and prepared for his journey to Yarborough.

"She'll be condemned sure enough," he mused. "They will recommend her to mercy perhaps, but if they do it will hardly better her fate. No, to one like her death would be far preferable to a life of penal servitude. Well! punishment falls like everything else in this world, very unequally; penal servitude for life to Hilda would be a million times greater torment than to most who suffer it. I can hardly say I hope she may escape the greater penalty, for to her I feel sure it would be in reality the lesser. Poor girl—poor girl!"

And he got into his carriage and drove off with a sorrowful heart.

The court was already thronged when he entered; every seat was filled, and a low hum of voices rose as he took his seat.

"It's Mr. Leonard—he who got off the woman at Ilchester last year. If anything can save her it's having him to defend her—first rate man. She's fortunate," he heard whispered around him, and then there was a hush for a moment, the doors opened, and the judge entered and took his accustomed seat.

With a start Hilda awoke that morning in her gloomy cell. She had been dreaming of home, and thought that she was walking again on the terrace at Ray Farm in the bright moonlight with Dennis beside her, and then a dark something had come between them and she saw him no more, and with a half-smothered cry she awoke and found herself within the stone walls of the prison and the day of her trial arrived.

She sat up for a moment and tried to collect her thoughts; her dream had been so vivid that she could not shake off the impressions of it. She could still feel the touch of Dennis's hand and his kiss on her lips and hear the sound of his voice. What did it mean? Ah! they could never meet again; no, that was impossible, and slowly she rose and began to dress, for it was already late, and she knew she would be taken to the court by eleven o'clock.

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the court when the prisoners' van conveying her to her trial drew up at it, and for an instant a cold shudder passed over her as the rough, harsh voices of the assembled populace reached her ears, and she dreaded to think of having to encounter their curious gaze. But when she stepped out of the van, accompanied by the warder and policeman, looking so fair and calm and beautiful in her sorrow, a sudden hush fell on the multitude, who looked at her with softened features, and a sort of stern pity in their hearts. So young! so lovely! Guilty or not guilty the roughest amongst them felt for the moment she was deserving of compassion, and amidst an almost profound silence she passed from the van into the court.

Then arose a low roar of clamouring, eager voices behind her, and the crowd swayed and surged from side to side. They had seen her, and her appearance had for a moment almost awed them, but she was gone and the old feeling of fierce curiosity and excitement filled every heart.

A dull, rustling sound filled the court as the doors were again opened; every head was turned in the direction of the opening portal, and every eye fixed on the prisoner, who walked quietly between two warders and took her place in the dock.

She was deadly pale, and her blue eyes had a look of almost unearthly sadness in them; the little white hands were clasped almost convulsively on her bosom, and the sweet, delicately-formed mouth quivered piteously, and many an eye was dimmed with tears as it rested on her sweet face, so sad, so calm, so pure, and many a heart felt sore and full of pity for her terrible fate, as calmly she stood in the midst, facing the judge and jury whose office it was either to restore her to light and life, or to condemn her to a cruel and shameful death.

When the preliminaries had been gone through, and the question guilty or not guilty was put to the prisoner, to the surprise of all no answer came from the quivering lips. It was repeated, and after a struggle, during which Mr. Leonard looked at his client with dismay written on every feature, she replied, in a low, clear tone:

"Not guilty, my lord."

And with a sigh of relief Mr. Leonard fell back in his seat.

"I was half afraid she was going to say guilty," he muttered. "The girl seems determined to die, but I'll see if I cannot save her in spite of herself."

And indeed for a moment the thought of pleading guilty and so ending the matter at once and rendering the pursuit of Dennis (for from perpetual brooding over her fearful fancies in her cell she had grown to persuade herself that Dennis's existence was really known to Mr. Leonard) unnecessary had crossed her mind and caused her to hesitate in her reply, and then the utter impossibility of uttering a lie in the face of the assembled multitude, of proclaiming herself a wretch not fit to live before her friends and those who had loved her from her earliest years, stopped her, and her lips, half unwillingly, uttered the truth, not guilty, and the trial continued.

Many witnesses were examined at great length, questioned and cross-questioned, but very few new facts relative to the murder were brought to light.

Only the fact of there being a bad feeling between the prisoner and the murdered woman was made clearer; the whole story of Eleanor's marriage and Dennis's desertion of Hilda Ray was told, and the meeting between him and the prisoner at Stoneyvale Gate detailed, together with the hard words and bitter speeches that Eleanor had showered on her husband and Hilda when she had discovered them together.

"I wonder what Mr. Jenkins says to that," whispered Mrs. Corfield to her friend beside her. "The other day he was quite rude to me when I told him there was some very odd story about Mr. Vanstone and Miss Ray, he quite flew out at me and walked off without giving me time to say that it was Eleanor herself, poor thing, who told me. I wonder what he thinks of it now?"

And she bent forward, trying to catch a glimpse of his face as he sat not far from the dock.

"Well," returned her friend, "there's clearly reason enough for their enmity, and, after all, poor Eleanor, though she had an abominable temper as we all know, was not so much to blame for hating her. Do you know I always mistrust those fair, baby-faced girls, Mrs. Corfield; they are deceitful and sly, and terribly spiteful sometimes. Of course Eleanor didn't like Vanstone's hanging about after his old love. I fear, my dear, the cause for ill-will between the two is plain enough."

And so apparently thought a good many of the spectators in court, and ere evening the belief that Hilda had in a sudden fit of hate or passion killed her enemy gained credence rapidly.

Perhaps they had met casually on the moor and high words had passed between them (Mrs. Vanstone had a bitter tongue as all knew), and the high words had led to blows, and Miss Ray, overcome by horror and remorse, had remained by the body, hardly knowing what she did, till people had come up and found her. That was the truth, depend on it. Miss Ray was very proud and held her head high, and these stories of Mrs. Vanstone's, so little to her credit, had doubtless roused very bitter feelings in her heart.

By evening the prosecution for the Crown had finished its case. Next day the defence would be begun, and on that day most probably the prisoner's fate would be decided.

Mr. Leonard felt that the task before him was a hard one indeed, and saw plainly how strongly against the prisoner popular feeling now ran.

And so Hilda was led back again to her cell to pass another night in uncertainty as to her fate, and with the prospect of the terrible morning before her.

Yes, and a hard trial was in store for her, for Mr. Leonard, accompanied by Mr. Jenkins and Margery, visited her that evening in her prison, and implored her to speak and to tell them once again all that had passed.

"Oh! Miss Hilda, my own dear young lady, if—if there is anything you are hiding, for God's sake speak out to-night before it is too late. Don't be angry with me, dearie, don't be angry with your old nurse, but Mr. Leonard here thinks you've not told us all. Nay, don't turn away from me—listen to my words and speak to him and to me—tell us all."

And the good woman fell on her knees before Hilda.

"Remember it is your last chance, Miss Ray. After to-morrow it will be difficult to help you. If there is one thing you have not told me that might by any possibility throw light on this terrible mystery I conjure you to tell it me," interposed Mr. Leonard, earnestly.

But Hilda made no answer. She sat with wide-opened, hopeless eyes, looking straight before her as if she hardly heard their imploring words, and then she said, in a voice so low and toneless that it hardly seemed to come from a living throat:

"I have no more to tell you—leave me in peace."

And falling on Margery's shoulder she sank into a deadly swoon.

"My poor lamb, my poor darling," sobbed Margery. "The Lord help her, we can do nothing. Oh! if He would but take her now in his mercy, before the cruel men there get hold of her and send her to a horrible death."

But it was not to be, and in a few minutes Hilda opened her eyes again on her prison cell, and on the tearful faces of her friends bending anxiously over her, and knew that on the morrow she must face her stern judge again and hear the sentence of the law pronounced against her.

It was a dreary morning, and the rain fell in soaking torrents on the crowd assembled again at the doors of the court-house, and a low, sullen roar broke from it as Hilda passed from the van through the portal and into the court.

The people had settled the point of her guilt

or innocence in their own minds since the day before, and all, or nearly all, in spite of her calm bearing, looked on her as a murderess.

She shuddered as the low, sullen sound greeted her, and for a moment her cheek paled, and then she walked firmly, with head erect, through the court and took her place again in the dock.

Silence reigned in the court when Mr. Leonard rose to begin the defence, a silence so profound that a pin might have been heard to drop; every eye was turned towards him, every ear listened attentively to his words; the interest was intense, and even the callous officials, accustomed daily to like scenes, seem to share in it.

There was little or no new evidence to bring forward, and Mr. Leonard had to found his defence principally on the entire improbability that the prisoner would, or could, have committed the crime she was charged with. He dwelt upon her youth, upon her high character in the county, upon her well-known piety and goodness, and asked the jury to reflect well before they pronounced a girl of tender nurture and known gentleness, kindness, and integrity, guilty of such a crime as that imputed to her.

It was true the murdered woman had not been her friend, but the enmity had been more on Mrs. Vanstone's side than hers. Mrs. Vanstone had been heard to utter hard words concerning Miss Ray, but he would bring witnesses to prove that Miss Ray had always spoken with perfect friendliness of Mrs. Vanstone.

As to the knife, it had not been seen for many days before the murder was committed, and had doubtless been stolen from the farm and used by the murderer for his fell purpose.

No eye had seen the prisoner deal the fatal blow. The evidence against her was purely circumstantial.

Long and eloquently he pleaded, but it was easy to see that he made but little way with his audience, and when he had concluded a dead, cold silence fell on the court, and with grave, downcast faces the jury retired to consult on their verdict.

They were absent nearly an hour, and breathlessly the vast concourse of living beings in the court waited to hear their verdict.

The prisoner stood calm and unmoved in her place, showing no outward sign of agitation. Only an occasional quivering of the lips betrayed her emotion, and it seemed as if she were hardly aware of what was taking place around her.

In another moment the suspense was over. The verdict was pronounced in unsteady tones by the foreman—"Guilty, but recommended to mercy."

All eyes were turned on the prisoner, who neither trembled nor moved, but stood with the far-away look in her melancholy eyes, as if the crowd around her, the terrible verdict that had just been uttered were things that concerned her not and of which she took no heed.

And when the judge asked her the usual question, if she had ought to say why sentence of death should not be passed on her, for a moment she seemed as if she had not heard him, and then, with a sad smile, and in a low, thrilling voice, replied:

"Nothing, my lord; but that, as God is my witness, I am guiltless of the deed."

And as she said the words she drew herself up and stood erect and firm to receive her sentence, with her eyes steadily fixed on the judge's countenance.

It was soon spoken—that terrible sentence that condemned her to a murderer's doom—and she left the court and was hastily conveyed back to prison, to leave it no more until the day should dawn on which she was to suffer death for the crime she had not committed. For she knew it would be death she would have to suffer—that the recommendation to mercy would be unavailing, for, pronounced guilty, her crime was without excuse.

And so the door of the condemned cell was closed on her with a sullen clang, and, clad in her prison garb, she sat thinking with a strange calmness of all that had passed.



[IN HER BITTER NEED.]

She looked back on her past life—on all its joys and griefs and troubles and anxiety, and how small and of little moment did they now appear, now that all was over—that she had done with life for ever, and that death was at hand! She marvelled how some things that had troubled her so greatly in days gone by could ever have troubled her at all. They looked so trivial and unimportant, viewed as she now viewed them.

Even her troubles appeared to her of much less moment, and she felt as if her grief for the sorrows that had fallen on her had been excessive. The future—the new life into which she would shortly be launched—was all that seemed worthy her consideration now.

"They will miss me and be sorry for me for awhile," she thought, "and then they will forget me, perhaps, for a time; but not for long. We shall meet again soon."

And then the terrible thought—the one thought that unnerved her and troubled her peace of mind would arise!—the thought of Dennis Vanstone.

"He will live—he will repent," she thought. "God is merciful. We shall meet again. He will not be cast away for ever. Let my death, oh! God, atone for his crime," she prayed.

And the days left for her to live upon earth passed slowly away, one after another.

Hilda had seen and said good-bye to her friends, but these partings troubled and distressed her, and finally she resolved to have but one interview more with Margery and Dr. Charnock, and then to say good-bye for ever to the outer world.

Sadly and solemnly the last words were spoken, the last adieux said, and the heavy doors of the condemned cell closed behind the faithful servant, and Hilda, falling on her knees beside her couch, wept bitterly.

She was quite alone now—quite alone. No kind voice would cheer her more with loving words—no eyes look lovingly into hers again on this side of the grave.

For a moment she was almost tempted to call her back to beg her to remain with her till the very last; but it was only for a moment. She knew that the sight of her dear old nurse's grief unnerved and unsettled her, and that all her strength of mind would be required to enable her to meet her fate with calmness, and that it was best the parting should take place at once.

So she checked herself and listened whilst Margery's footsteps died away in the long stone corridor, and with them passed away from out of her existence all that tied her to her past life.

And now she was left to pass the last days of her sojourn on earth almost entirely alone. The only person who intruded on her solitude was the jail chaplain, who, at stated intervals, came to read and pray with her and prepare her for her end.

"I do not fear to die, sir," she replied, simply, in answer to a long exhortation from the worthy man, who, to the best of his ability, strove to do his duty. "I do not fear to die. I am a sinner, but Heaven is merciful."

He looked at her calm face, and, for the first time, a doubt of her guilt crossed his mind, but he dismissed it again and continued his discourse.

"You admit the justice of your sentence, Miss Ray, I trust, and have confessed in secret your grievous sin?" he asked, gravely.

Hilda was silent for a moment, but as he repeated the question still more emphatically she answered it.

"No, sir," she said, quietly. "I cannot admit the justice of my sentence. I am not guilty of the murder of Mrs. Vanstone."

The chaplain sighed. He was accustomed to this—accustomed to hear the most hardened criminals, taken red-handed, deny to the last their crime; but this young girl—he had hoped better things of her.

"What?" he answered, "do you still persist, after your trial, in declaring your innocence? Ah! my dear young friend, shake off all dis-

guise, and confess your sin openly before God and man."

Hilda looked almost pityingly at the old man. "I have made my peace with God, sir; as to men, I care nothing for them now. My trial was a fair and open one. The evidence that was given at it was true. I have nothing whatever to find fault with; but if I confessed to you that I had done this deed, I should confess a lie, for I am innocent. Let us talk no more about this, sir. I have sins enough to confess and repent of, I know, short as my life has been—but not this one—no!"

The old clergyman regarded her attentively. Was she speaking the truth, or was it only the old story—a desperate clinging to a straw that many a culprit had displayed to him before? He was puzzled. He could not tell.

"If your words are true," he said, at last, "you have indeed been through a fiery trial, but—"

Hilda smiled gently.

"I know how strange and impossible it must appear to you that I should have been wrongly condemned. I scarcely expect you to believe it. But what matters it, dear sir? I am ready and willing and prepared to die if God so wills it. Do not let us speak more of my guilt or innocence."

And she looked at him with calm, fearless eyes that brought again to the chaplain's mind a feeling of certainty that here, at least, there was before him a victim of the fallibility of the law.

For a while the thought troubled him sorely; but what could he do? Her trial had been open and regular. She had had the best legal advice. He could not help her.

And so he went sadly about his daily business, and tried to put the disturbing thoughts out of his mind and bring himself to believe that she was like the rest of them and could not be persuaded to allow that her punishment was merited. But in vain.

(To be Continued.)

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[A FAIR AMANUENSIS.]

## THE LOST DAUGHTER.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

### CHAPTER I.

#### LORD LOVEL'S SECRET.

THERE never was a stranger man than Archibald Croft, Earl of Lovel. So said everyone who knew him. Friends and foes agreed as to his eccentricity, and so we must conclude that it was an established fact.

The Honourable Captain Croft had been one of the most popular men in his regiment, gay, high-spirited, always looking on the bright side of things, and making the best of his pay and a strictly limited private income.

People might have forgiven him if he had grumbled when he had only four hundred a year all told, no chance seemingly of coming into the title, and at thirty-five was sent on foreign service in an expensive regiment to an unhealthy Indian station, but at this time he did not grumble at all; he seemed most perfectly satisfied with his lot.

Twelve months later he returned to England, possessor of thirty thousand a year, a grand ancestral estate, and a noble title. And this through the deaths of an uncle and cousins he had known little and liked less.

Everyone was delighted at his good fortune; everyone predicted that their favourite would marry at once and make Lovel the hospitable mansion it had been in bygone years.

Surely no fate could be fairer, no good fortune more unexpected than his. He had been contented on four hundred a year, he would certainly be radiant on thirty thousand.

What was the popular surprise—what was the

general amazement when Lord Lovel fulfilled none of people's expectations?

He sold out as soon as the news of his good fortune reached him, and sailed for England by the next steamer, but he never went near Lovel, he never sought out one of the friends or kinsfolk who would have been so proud to welcome him.

For three months he remained in London, invisible apparently to everyone but his lawyers, for none of his acquaintance met him or discovered his address. Then a paragraph appeared in the fashionable papers announcing that Lord Lovel had gone on a prolonged foreign tour.

Match-making mammas were furious, blushing belles were disappointed, the tenantry at Lovel could hardly believe it, but so it was. The grand old place remained shut up for three years, then the earl came home, silver threads in his thick, dark hair, the shadow of a grave sorrow on his face.

He did not hide himself from his friends now. He took up all the duties of his position. He passed a good deal of his time at Lovel, and was beloved by the people there as the best landlord for miles round.

He spent the season in London, and moved in all the gaieties where it is an earl's manifest duty to appear, but two facts remained—he never showed the slightest admiration for any of the beautiful faces which adorned Belgravia, and he was never known to smile.

It was unheard of, it was monstrous, it was base ingratitude to Providence, people said, but their remarks did not often reach the earl, and if they had they would have troubled him little.

Lord Lovel cared nothing for idle gossip. He had tried and faithful friends, but not one of them knew the secret of his life, though most suspected that some heavy trouble must have come to change him thus.

But there were a few people in the world who quite forgave the earl for not marrying, who even thought it quite right of him not to do so. These were, of course, his own nearest relations,

who might, if he continued single, look forward some day to enjoying his money.

Foremost among these was the Honourable Mrs. Edward Croft, the widow of Archibald's twin brother, who had never been able to forgive her husband for coming into the world five minutes later than his brother, and thus depriving her of all chance of being a countess.

Mrs. Croft was not particularly young. She had been older than her husband at the time of their marriage, and after his death she aged rapidly, owing no doubt to the anxieties attendant on very small means and a large family.

As soon as Lord Lovel came into his property he settled five hundred a year upon his sister-in-law for life, warning her distinctly at the same time that she must count on nothing more from him; but when three years later Archibald returned to England unmarried Mrs. Edward's hopes ran high.

She saw herself in imagination a sort of vice-countess for the rest of her life, and she wrote off eagerly, proffering a long visit to Lovel for herself and children.

A more worldly man would have seen through her motives, but the earl saw nothing; he was pleased by her offer, and accepted it. For six months Mrs. Croft and family lived at Lovel; then when they left, the youngest child, a boy of fourteen, had so endeared himself to his uncle that Lord Lovel declared he could not do without him, he would be answerable for Archie's schooling and college fees, and he must stay and make his home with him.

That was fourteen years ago; the arrangement had prospered rarely. The earl was fifty-three now, a tall, handsome man, in all the prime and vigour of life. Archie Croft was twenty-eight, and, in all but name, his son.

Lord Lovel had always told his nephew firmly that he would not be his heir. To do Archie justice, he never counted on such a thing. He was very fond of his uncle, very grateful for all that the earl had done for him.

He always maintained that Lord Lovel had a perfect right to do what he would with his own.

The title, doubtless, would one day come to him, but as neither the lands nor revenues of Lovel were entailed, their present owner had the power of leaving them to whomever he pleased.

"And why shouldn't he?" cried Archie, a little impatiently one day, when the subject was being discussed in his mother's drawing-room. "Why, because he has treated me generously should I turn round and grumble that he is not obliged to leave me all he has?"

"You are perfectly absurd, Archie," declared his mother. "You have no sense whatever."

"One thing is hopeful," said Mrs. Seymour, Archie's eldest sister. "Uncle Lovel evidently cares for no one else very particularly. All these years he has never noticed anyone but Archie, so if you will play your cards well," nodding to her brother, "and don't let him fall in love with any designing maid or widow I should say you had a good chance of his money."

"I don't want it," a little sulkily. "You fancy, Alice, everyone is as fond of money as you are."

Now Mrs. Seymour had married for love a man of old family and small means, so this was a particularly unkind remark, but as Archibald might some day be a wealthy earl she was kind enough to overlook it.

"Whatever you do, Archie," observed his mother, "be careful whom you marry. In your position wealth is all-powerful. If Lord Lovel sees you with a wealthy wife and knows you don't particularly need his money, he is pretty sure to leave it to you."

Archibald rose carelessly. He had wonderfully little affection for his mother. A very little of her society always seemed to him more than enough.

"You are home early," said Lord Lovel, pleasantly, as his nephew walked into the library about ten o'clock.

"I have been to Baywater," with a shrug of his shoulders that spoke volumes.

Lord Lovel nodded sympathetically.

"You don't seem to have enjoyed yourself."

"I never do there. I believe they think of nothing but money from Sunday morning to Saturday night."

"Either of the other girls engaged?"

Archibald shook his head.

"My mother had much better think of getting them off before she turns her attention to me."

"What! Has Mrs. Croft been matchmaking on your account? I am surprised."

"She has not got quite so far as that. She only impresses on me that it is my bounden duty to marry money."

The earl sighed so heavily that his nephew felt startled. Was there, after all, some romance in his past which had awoken from the depths of memory by that one mention of marriage?

"How old are you, Archie?"

"Twenty-eight. There's time enough yet, as I told my mother to-night."

"Twenty-eight, and I am fifty-three. Dear me! how time passes! I begin to think your mother is right in one point, though not in the other. It is about time you thought of marrying. I should like to see your wife before I die."

"You are not going to die yet," returned the young man, cheerfully. "You are a young man, comparatively speaking."

"In years, perhaps, but we are not a very long-lived race. Well, turn it over in your mind, my boy. I should like to welcome the future Countess of Lovel."

"I don't think I shall ever marry."

His uncle stared. He knew Archie well, and this declaration quite amazed him.

"Why not?" he asked, rather straight.

"I hardly know," idly playing with the flower in his coat. "I suppose people generally marry for love or money. I have never felt more than admiration for any girl, and I am a great deal too proud to propose to any woman for the sake of her money."

"You don't need money. You have your profession, and whenever you marry I shall settle a suitable income upon you."

"I hope you won't," said Archie, slowly.

"What on earth do you mean?"

"When I came here first you told my mother I could never be your heir. I remember it perfectly. Well, as Heaven is my witness, I declare, uncle, I have never sought, by word or deed, to induce you to change your mind—never once."

"And I have not changed it," returned the earl, quietly. "You can never be my heir, because there is someone who has a nearer claim upon me; but I am a very rich man. I don't suppose I have spent a quarter of my income for the last fifteen years, and so when you have found your ideal of feminine beauty I don't think her father will be discontented at the settlement I can enable you to make on her."

It was Archie's turn to look surprised. His father had been the earl's only brother; therefore, who could be nearer to Lord Lovel than himself? His perplexity was so clearly written upon his face that his uncle observed it, and determined to trust him with the secret of his life.

"Shut the door, Archie, and sit down. We have known each other a good many years now, and I think I can trust you with the only secret I have ever had. I might have told you years ago, only that I dreaded your mother's influence."

"You need not fear that," returned the young man, simply. "We never pull wall-together, my mother and I; there is no sympathy between us. I have often wondered why."

"Perhaps because you take so entirely after our side of the family."

"Do I?"

"Of course. You are a thorough Croft and always have been."

"You were going to tell me a secret," said the young man, wistfully. "I do not want to seem curious, but I own I should like to hear it."

"You know that until I came into the earldom I was a poor man, poorer even than your father, for he had been the lucky one and inherited our mother's small fortune."

"Yes, I have heard that. People have told me you were gayer and happier in those days than you have ever been since."

"My trouble had not come then. People never guessed the blow that made my life desolate. When I went to India, Archie, I left one behind in England dearer to me than life itself, my beautiful young wife."

"Your wife! The Countess of Lovel?"

"She never was Countess of Lovel. She died before I got the title, poor child. I came home full of delight at the thought that we need never be separated again, and I was met on landing by the news of her death."

"It was a sad welcome home."

"It was a bitter blow. But for one thought I could have wished myself sleeping beneath the waves. That one thought had the power to make me command my feelings and bear up as best I could against my grief, because my wife had left me a precious legacy—our little child. My first feelings on hearing of my daughter's birth had been not unmixed with disappointment. By the same mail I had learned that I was Earl of Lovel, and I should have liked an heir to the ancient title, but when I knew my darling was gone I felt a strange consolation that the child she had left me was a girl who could bear her name and perhaps inherit her sweet face. I set out at once for Scotland. I travelled night and day until I reached the remote village in the Highlands where I had left my wife in the charge of her only relation, an elder sister."

"My aunt was Scotch, then?"

"No, she was English wholly, but this half-sister had brought her up and was devoted to her own hills and moors. I met my wife in England, a beautiful girl who had not left school, and was spending her holidays at the house of one of my fellow officers. We were married privately, and for months her sister refused to see or write to her, but I suppose she loved her too much to remain estranged, for when the news reached her that my regiment was ordered abroad, and Elsie was too ill to accompany me, she wrote at once urging me to leave my darling in her care during my absence."

"And you consented?"

"What else could I do? She had no relation

in the world but Miss Mackenzie, and I had no near ties except your father and mother, who were totally ignorant of my marriage, and could hardly have been expected to receive at a moment's notice a sister-in-law of whom they had never heard before."

"And so you consented to trust Miss Mackenzie. I almost wonder at it," went on the younger man, musingly. "She had but little cause to like you, you see, uncle."

"You speak almost as if you knew the end of my story, Archie. Surely no one has ever told you of it before?"

"No one," returned Archie, simply. "But go on. You started at once for Scotland in search of Miss Mackenzie and your daughter."

"I did; no thought of treachery came to me. I had seen Miss Mackenzie only once, when I thought her a pleasant, good-tempered woman. I knew she had been tenderly itself to Elsie, and her two letters to myself, the one announcing my daughter's birth, the latter her mother's death, were just the simple, kindly misuses a quiet, kind-hearted lady would write. I got to the village too late to call upon Miss Mackenzie, so I put up at the little inn for the night, and the next morning directly after breakfast I went up to the white house and asked to see her. The house was just as I had left it, but the servant was a stranger. She told me that Miss Mackenzie had sold the house to her mistress directly after Mrs. Croft's death and gone to England with the baby. She was taking it to meet its father she had said."

"It was a strange thing to do," said Archie, "for a lady who had lived in a Scotch village all her life to undertake such a journey as that in winter with a baby."

"Yes," with a sigh. "Even then, however, I did not suspect the truth, and I asked the servant when Miss Mackenzie would be back. Not at all was the answer. Then, Archie, I own I felt alarmed, and I asked to speak to the servant's mistress. She repeated the story I had already heard, but added that Miss Mackenzie had left a small box addressed to myself in case I should call."

"In that box I found every memorial of my departed wife, even to her wedding-ring. Miss Mackenzie had not kept back the slightest trifle. A long letter from herself was at the bottom of the box. At first when I read it I thought she was mad. She told me she had never loved anyone in the world but her sister, and she meant now to devote her whole life to her sister's child. I was young and in time of course I should marry again. She did not blame me, but her sister's child should not be ill-treated by a step-mother. In short, Archie, love for the baby had conquered every other feeling, and Miss Mackenzie had robbed me of my child. She had given up home, friends and everything for the baby's sake, and taken it away that it might never be separated from her."

"It was shameful," declared Captain Croft.

"Nothing better than a madwoman's act."

"At first I thought it would be easy enough to find them, and I was almost touched at the old Scotchwoman's devotion to my child, and I determined that, come what would, they should never be separated, but Miss Mackenzie be welcome to live and die at Lovel."

"I went back to London and told the tale just as I have related it to you to one of the most skillful detectives of the day. In four and twenty hours the search was begun, and everything that professional skill could suggest was done for the restoration of my daughter without the slightest avail. No clue to her was ever found."

"It is the strangest thing I ever heard."

"I have never recovered the disappointment. Think what Lovel would have been with my Elsie's child for its mistress. Miss Mackenzie must be mad to think I could ever set another woman in my darling's place and take a second wife."

"And you have never heard anything?"

"Never. You see some days had been lost before I received that fatal letter. The detectives always declared that Miss Mackenzie took the child abroad. My own fancy was that she



## CHAPTER II.

## PANSY.

settled down in some out-of-the-way place near London. There would be far less chance of discovery there than in going to either France or Germany, since she spoke no language but English."

"And you think she is still alive?"

"I am sure of it."

"Why?" Then feeling his question was cruelly abrupt, he added: "You seem so positive that you must have something more than mere conjecture to go upon."

"I have this circumstance. Every year, on the anniversary of my wife's death, a wreath of white flowers appears on her grave in the lonely kirkyard of that remote Scottish village."

"But surely you could trace Miss Mackenzie from such a token."

Lord Lovel shook his head sadly.

"We tried to, but the wreath—it is always of everlasting—is sent to the minister of Dugdale, and it has never once been dispatched from the same railway station. The fact is of no help to us, save to prove that Miss Mackenzie is still alive. At least it does that."

"But that is hardly an advantage."

"She was so devoted to my child's mother that I am convinced she would give her life to save my daughter from a sorrow. So long as Janet Mackenzie is with her I never need think of my little one as lonely or unhappy."

"But how long is it to go on?" asked Archie, angrily. "Are you never to have the comfort of your daughter's presence, because her aunt chooses to fancy she cannot exist without her?"

"I have the fixed impression," said the earl, "that my darling will be restored to me some day. It is only a question of time. If Janet were ill or dying she would send for me, I am sure."

"Would she know where to send?"

"Why, Archie, of course she would. The Crofts of Lovel are known all over England."

"And you have given up the search?"

"I have not given it up. My agents are watching still. Often and often my attention has been called to an old Scotchwoman and a young girl living alone together, but it has always been a false alarm."

"You would recognise Miss Mackenzie?"

"Among a hundred. She was a most remarkable-looking woman; besides, Archie, though I have never seen her face, do you think I could fail to recognise my Elsie's child?"

Archie did think so. He was no great believer in extraordinary resemblances, but when he saw the comfort with which the belief evidently inspired his uncle he was too kind-hearted to try to rob him of it.

"So you see," went on the earl, pleasantly, "while though I have loved you like a son you can never be my heir. You will be Lord Lovel, and I promise you that you shall never feel the want of money, but the bulk of all I have and Lovel itself must go to my unknown daughter. I could not disinherit Elsie's child, even for you, Archie."

"I should never wish you to do it."

"So you see you are free to think about a wife as soon as you please, and remember, Archie, all this is between ourselves; not a word of it to your mother and sisters."

"You may rely on me. Uncle, you will let me know when you hear anything of"—he hesitated—"my cousin?"

And then he slowly left the room.

That conversation was a great relief to the Earl of Lovel. Often he had feared he did his nephew an injustice by having him living to all appearances as his heir.

"I am glad I told him. He bore it very well. I don't think he had been counting on what he would come into at my death."

Then a sudden thought came to him which made him start up impatiently from his chair and wish more urgently than ever for his lost daughter.

"Why should Archie not marry her? He is like all the Crofts—he worships beauty; and who could be lovelier than my Elsie's child?"

Just the same May evening on which the earl had imparted his secret to his nephew in a small house in a narrow London street a young girl sat by the window looking out.

There was not much to see. Prospect Street was a dull place, and no one came there unless they had business at one of the little houses which were all painfully alike and painfully ugly.

Pansy Grant and her mother occupied the ground floor of No. 5. They had not lived there very long; it seemed to Pansy that all her short life she never had lived long anywhere.

The lodgings were very cheap—only fifteen shillings a week and all found—yet as the girl sat there, sadly looking out to the dingy pavement, she was thinking they must soon look for humbler ones.

Their little stock of money was growing lower and lower, and Mrs. Grant, who had been wont to add to their store and eke out a very scanty income by giving lessons, was now ill.

Slowly the girl rose and went through the folding doors into the next room. A woman, gaunt and grey, lay upon the bed. She had a plain, hard-featured face, but it lighted up with tenderest love as the girl entered.

And in truth Pansy Grant was just the kind of creature to win love. She was very small and graceful, her figure so light as to give her an almost childish appearance, her thick, golden hair was coiled low round her shapely head, and her blue, star-like eyes were full of tenderness. Add to this that her complexion was fair and delicate, her mouth small and well curved, her whole face full of intelligence, and yet more full of feeling, and I think you will admit that she was winsome.

"Pansy."

"Are you better, mother, dear? Did Dr. Grey think you more yourself?"

"Sit down, Pansy."

Half-tremblingly the girl obeyed.

There had never been full confidence between these two. Mrs. Grant had idolised Pansy; she would have given her life to shield her from a sorrow, but she had always treated her as a child. It had seemed a little hard sometimes to the budding dignity of eighteen, but Pansy was very sweet-tempered, and had never complained.

"Is there anything the matter?" strangely awed by the sound of her mother's voice. "Does Dr. Grey think you worse to-night, mother?"

She never said mamma; it had always been mother ever since she could speak.

"He says that I am dying, Pansy; that in a few days' time you will be alone."

The girl burst into an uncontrolled fit of sobs.

"Don't leave me, mother," she pleaded. "Stay with me." Ah! how willingly would the other have done so. "We have never been parted," urged Pansy.

"But we must part now. I would not have told you this, darling, if there had been the least hope. As soon as I felt sure of that I spoke. I must think of your future, my dearest."

"I don't want any future away from you," sobbed Pansy.

"Then you have been happy, little one?"

"Very happy."

"In spite of the hardships and the troubles?"

"We have had no real troubles—till now."

"Often when I have been obliged to refuse you pretty things, Pansy, when I have had to keep you shut up in these poor, dull rooms, I have wondered if I did you a wrong, but I loved you so, my own, I couldn't help it. If it was to come over again I should do just the same, Pansy."

"Do not speak so, mother," pleaded the girl. "We have been very happy. We couldn't help not being rich; it wasn't our fault, you know."

"Would you like to be rich, Pansy?"

"Not without you, mother."

"Listen, dear; let me tell you all while I am strong enough. Pansy, I am not your mother,

though I could not have loved you better if you had been born my child."

"Not my mother!" cried the girl, pitifully. "Oh, say it is not true. I have loved you so."

"And I you, but it is true, my darling. Your mother was my sister, and she died before you were a month old. Your father was abroad then with his regiment. He was a gay, handsome man, and I knew he would soon marry again. He came of a fine old family, and he would not have cared to have a dull old Scotchwoman in his home, and so, God forgive me, Pansy, I took you away."

"Took me away! What can you mean?"

"Your father had never seen you. He could not love you as I did; he would have another wife and other children. To me you were just all the world, and so I took you away."

Pansy had just one prejudice; it had been carefully fostered by Mrs. Grant. She had an intense terror of step-mothers. Many children have.

"You did quite right, mother—I can never call you aunt. You have been the best and tenderest of mothers to me, and I have been quite happy—quite."

"Heaven bless you, darling, for those words. You forgive me then, my own?"

"There must be no talk of forgiveness between you and me. I shall love and honour you always as the only mother I have ever known."

"And when I am gone what will you do, childie? Would you like to go to your father?"

Pansy shuddered.

"He wouldn't want me," she said, simply, "if he has been all these years without seeing me. Besides, if he is so rich and grand he would look down upon me."

"He could not," said her adopted mother, "you are his first-born child. No one could look down upon you, Pansy, I assure you."

Pansy shook her head decidedly.

"If I went to him he would not like to send me away. He would be in a measure bound to keep me and he might not like it. I shouldn't like to foist myself upon him. I would rather work for my own living."

Work! That fairy sprite! Janet Mackenzie looked at her in despair. How could she?

"You will not be quite unprovided for, dear. There is my little money in the bank; it brings in fifty pounds a year."

"I don't mind how hard I work," sobbed Pansy, "only I think I'd rather die and go to Heaven with you, but I won't go to my father. He would be ashamed of me. He might say unkind things of you. He couldn't love me, you know."

In vain her aunt strove to dissuade her from such thoughts. Her perceptions sharpened by the near approach of death, she became painfully conscious of the cruel wrong she had done Archibald Croft (the only name she knew him by) and his daughter. Besides, Pansy was utterly unfitted to cope with the world.

"At least let me send for your father."

But Pansy refused.

"If you really love me you will never say anything about it again. Let us be mother and daughter to the end."

But Janet Mackenzie's conscience had awoke. She felt she could not die with the secret of Pansy's parentage unrevealed, and so she bound Dr. Grey over to secrecy and confessed the whole story to him. She signed a statement in his presence, and this with the certificate of Pansy's baptism and her mother's marriage were sealed up and deposited in the good doctor's keeping.

"Don't tell me the name," he said, as Miss Mackenzie began her story, "it would make matters awkward if I ever met any of the family."

"There, now," as the packet was delivered up to him, "you must not fret. You have done all in your power to undo the wrong, poor soul."

"But, Pansy is firm. She says nothing will induce her to apply to her father."

"Pansy is only a child," said the old doctor, kindly. "I think when she finds what a rough place this world is to walk in alone she will be

glad of a father's arm to smoothe it for her. Mrs. Grey and I will take care of her. Poor child, it will be a hard blow the losing of you. No daughter ever loved a mother better."

"That has been my punishment all these years. She loved me so and I had wronged her."

Ten days later all that remained of the sin-laden creature had been buried in a city cemetery, and Pansy became the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Grey until she could meet with a suitable situation as governess.

In vain Dr. Grey urged her to make herself known to her father; in vain he told her any parent would be proud of her. The girl in her humility refused.

"He couldn't send me away, you know, and it would be hard on him to expect him to love me."

"Well, I suppose you must have your own way. Remember, though, the moment you change your mind you send to me and I will write to your father at once. A governess's life is not all roses, little girl."

"No," cheerfully, "but I shall do my best, and Mrs. Seymour seems very nice."

"Well, I hope she'll prove so."

And the next day Pansy Grant, otherwise the Lady Heartsease Croft, took up an abode with the Honourable Mrs. Seymour, who little suspected she had engaged her own first cousin.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE HEIRESS IS DISCOVERED.

NOTHING could have been a greater contrast than the dingy lodgings Pansy had occupied with her adopted mother and the pretty villa at St. John's Wood where Mrs. Seymour lived. But before she had been a week in her new home the girl had learned that the two places had one great resemblance—the strange scarcity of ready money.

The Grants had been poor; every sixpence had to do something more than its proper work. Pansy and her mother (to continue to call Miss Mackenzie such) had never indulged in luxuries, and often had to deny themselves comforts, but they had never known the woeful pinching to make both ends meet which was the custom at Mrs. Seymour's.

It was not altogether the lady's fault. She had married for love a man who had been used to luxury all his life, and she soon found out that her only chance of retaining his affection was to make his home attractive. In this she succeeded. Her children might be shabby and neglected, her servants might be perpetually leaving to better themselves, and all her leisure might have to go in ceaseless stitching and never-ending economy in private, but she never paraded her difficulties before her husband. She was always ready to go out with him as well dressed as if she had possessed thousands a year, and when he brought his friends home she received them with a cordial welcome and entertained them with an elegant simplicity which made them vote her house the pleasantest one they knew of at which to visit.

But there were three little Misses Seymour, and when the eldest had reached the age of ten their mother woke up to the knowledge that something must be done for them. In a few years' time they would be marriageable; clearly it was not a whit too soon to commence their education. She advertised for a nursery governess, and from all the answers she received she chose Pansy Grant's because she alone was satisfied with the truly limited salary of fifteen pounds a year.

"Who is that girl, Alice?" asked the Honourable Captain Seymour, a day or two after Miss Grant's arrival, when he had met the stranger two or three times upon the stairs.

"A governess. I was obliged to have one, really, George. Blanche is ten years old."

"Where did you pick her up?"

"She was most highly recommended."

"I am not finding fault, my dear," laughing. "Only it struck me she was rather a superior person to wash and dress children."

"She has seen better days."

"Most people have. Well, as we don't possess a grown-up son, and I never had any eyes for beauty except yours, there is no particular harm done, but most ladies would consider you fearfully rash to admit such a pretty girl."

Nothing more was said, and as the weeks wore on Alice Seymour began to congratulate herself upon her bargain. Nothing could have been more satisfactory than Miss Grant. The children worshipped her, the servants were devoted to her. She seemed to have a special gift for manufacturing small frocks out of discarded finery, and the children had never appeared to so much advantage in their lives.

Once in July, when the season was waning, the Earl of Lovel called upon his niece and beheld, for the first time in his life, the three Misses Seymour grouped round their mamma in the drawing-room. Alice was fond of her children, and their new dresses being both pretty and becoming, she had for once not deemed it necessary to banish them on the arrival of visitors.

The earl was delighted with his little nieces, and hearing their mother was going abroad with her husband, and the children had the gloomy prospect of being left behind in town, he invited the whole family to take up their quarters at Lovel for August.

"I shall not get down before September, but my housekeeper will see to the little people, and of course you can send their nurse or someone with them, Alice."

Alice jumped at the proposal. A whole month free of expense, it was far too good to be refused. She thanked her uncle gratefully, and accepted enthusiastically.

The servants at Lovel were all old retainers devoted to the family. They received the little Misses Seymour with delighted respect. It was years since there had been children's voices at Lovel, and everyone seemed as if they could not do enough for the master's nieces.

Pansy Grant thought fairyland had opened for her when she saw the beautiful old house with its picturesque grounds.

"How happy we shall be."

"Yes," returned Blanche, thoughtfully. "I am so glad mamma told Uncle Lovel she was going to Switzerland without us."

A whole week passed, and the little party had become used to the delights of country life, when one morning Mrs. Stone, the housekeeper, came in while they were at breakfast and told them their uncle had come down unexpectedly the night before.

"I'm sure, ma'am," to Pansy, "I never was so surprised in my life. The captain walked in just as though he had been expected. He's sprained his hand or something, and so he means just to stay quietly at Lovel until the earl comes down."

Great awe sat on the children's faces. Would this unknown uncle suddenly turn them away from their paradise? Must they go back to the house at St. John's Wood, where all the furniture had been done up in brown holland, till mamma came back?

Blanche, the eldest of the three, managed to express their fears to Mrs. Stone. The good woman laughed heartily. The captain turn anyone away? Why, he was the best-hearted gentleman in the world. Besides, he would not see much of them, his rooms were in the other wing.

In another hour the children would have forgotten all about their uncle, but just as they were preparing to go out Mrs. Stone came in again.

"I beg your pardon, miss," she said, respectfully, to Pansy, "but the captain wants some letters written; he can't use his right hand, you see. He asked me, but I made bold to tell him you'd do it better."

Pansy never thought of refusing. To her the children's uncle was a very venerable personage indeed.

Commending the little girls to the care of Lucy, a maid Mrs. Stone had specially told off to attend on them, she followed the housekeeper to the library.

"Come in," as she knocked very lightly at the door.

A very handsome man was sitting in a large easy-chair reading the newspaper. He started as she entered. He had expected to see a very different looking personage, having some slight knowledge of his sister's circumstances. This girl looked the daughter of a hundred earls, her close-fitting black dress showing off every line of her dainty figure and suiting the creamy white of her complexion.

"I beg your pardon," cried Captain Croft, hurriedly. "Mrs. Stone is an idiot, she told me you were the children's governess."

"I am the children's governess," opening her large eyes in surprise. "Did you want some letters written, Captain Croft?"

She took a seat at the long oaken table and drew some writing materials towards her. The perfect grace of her attitude charmed Archie's fastidious eye.

Composition had never been such a difficulty to him before. It was so pleasant watching the pretty picture opposite that his ideas refused to collect themselves.

"I am quite ready," said Pansy, simply. "Would you please begin? The children are waiting for me to take them out."

"Their nurse can do that."

"They have no nurse."

He saw she was in earnest and hurriedly began to dictate. He noticed how clear and distinct her writing was. He was quite sorry when the letter was ended.

"May I trouble you again?" he asked her.

"I have a great many letters owing, and my hand is too painful for me to use it."

Pansy promised simply. To her there was nothing unusual in the request. Captain Croft had a bad hand and could not write his own letters. What more natural than that he should desire a substitute?

She wished him good evening and vanished.

"So that's Alice's governess," mused Archie, when he was left alone. "Well, I have seen a great many heiresses in my time, but I never met such a perfectly graceful girl. I wonder where Alice picked her up."

He had determined to improve his acquaintance with the beautiful young governess.

That very afternoon he met Blanche in one of the long passages, and after fairly fascinating the little maid let her lead him off a very willing prisoner to the five-o'clock tea, which good Mrs. Stone always sent up for the children.

"Will you admit me, Miss Grant?"

He had heard her name from Blanche.

The young governess blushed.

"Would you not be quieter in the library?"

"I am tired of quiet. I shall enjoy a little noise."

From that day he never failed to join them at tea. He did something more. He accompanied them in their rambles. The children soon lost their fear of him and grew to regard Uncle Archie as a very considerable acquisition.

But, after all, it was not to their amusement he chiefly devoted himself. In those days of pleasant summer idleness he learned that women were good for something besides being admired.

Captain Archie, who had known the beauties of many a London season and resisted their fascinations, fell hopelessly in love with the little governess, who had only her sweet face for her dower. Before they had known each other a fortnight he had resolved that life would not be worth having unless she would promise to be his wife.

"I can't think how you came to be a governess," he said to her one day. "What could your friends be about?"

"I have no friends."

"No friends?"

"Dr. Grey and his wife are very good to me, but they are not exactly friends. I never knew them until my mother was ill."

He looked down at her black dress and understood perfectly why she wore it.

"You are quite thrown away," he said, slowly. "Anyone could teach those mites of children."



"I am very happy," simply. "I should not like to leave your little nieces, Captain Croft."

"Don't you ever feel dull?"

Pansy shook her head.

"I have no time to think of it."

She had no idea whither they were drifting. She knew that this summer was sweeter to her than any summer had ever been before, but she never guessed why. She looked on Captain Croft as a hero. She never realised that heroes are dangerous companions for little governesses. They might have gone on in their ignorance for weeks, but, unfortunately for Archie, the Honourable George Seymour resolved to go on from Switzerland to Rome, and his pretty young wife came to Lovel to join her children.

No one expected her. She came late one evening, and when she had changed her travelling dress she went into the grounds. She found her children playing at hide-and-seek, whilst their pretty governess was in earnest conversation with the handsome, stately man who would one day be Earl of Lovel.

Mrs. Seymour was a wise woman. Many a lady, on discovering her governess in such a terrible crime as flirting with her brother would have lost her temper and scolded them both. Alice did nothing of the kind. She was as amiable and polite as it was possible to be. Only when Pansy went indoors with the little girls, their mother took occasion to follow her, and after many expressions of gratitude for her care of them offer her a week's holiday.

In vain Pansy protested she did not desire any. Mrs. Seymour was not to be turned from her generous design.

"You can go straight to St. John's Wood, my dear. I don't doubt that nice kind doctor you have told me of will be delighted to have you; if not, you can have a nice, quiet week to yourself at home. You really want so much change. There is a slow train up with a third class at nine o'clock."

She carried her point, as most determined women do.

When Mrs. Seymour and her brother sat down to their ten-o'clock breakfast Pansy was far on her way to town.

"What are you going to do this morning?" asked Captain Croft, abruptly, after the cloth had been removed and he found himself alone with his sister.

"I am afraid I must stay at home with the children. I have sent Miss Grant for a little holiday," looking steadily at her brother.

He never attempted to misunderstand.

"Alice, what made you do that?"

"Affection for the girl, chiefly," retorted Mrs. Seymour. "I am not going to have her heart broken; and, of course, you cannot be absurd enough to think of making her Lady Lovel."

"I am quite absurd enough."

"Archie?"

"Where should I find a sweeter wife?"

"She has not a halfpenny."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Fortunately I have enough for both."

"You, Lord Lovel, to marry a poor little governess?"

"I am not Lord Lovel yet."

"What will the earl say?"

"He told me months ago that he would welcome any wife I chose. He will soon love Pansy."

"You are certainly mad."

"Now, truly, Alice, don't you admit that Miss Grant is a lady, far superior to many we have met?"

"Yes, but—"

"Look here, my dear. It is not so very many years since you made a romantic marriage yourself. You surely are not going to admit you repent it?"

"Oh! no. But this is so different."

"I confess I cannot see it."

"Then you are quite resolved?"

"Perfectly."

"Oh! dear. Then I need not have sent her away, and it was so inconvenient to spare her."

Archie smiled.

"Would you like me to go and fetch her back?"

"I don't suppose what I say will make any difference. You are so infatuated."

He grew grave at once.

"Nothing will prevent my asking Miss Grant to be my wife; but unless I am much mistaken her acceptance of my proposal depends on you."

"On me?" delighted to be of some importance.

"What can you mean, Archie?"

"Only that Pansy is far too sensitive to be willing to marry any man against his relations' wishes; so you see, Alice, after all my fate lies in your hands; think of yourself and George, dear, and be merciful."

That allusion touched her.

"Well, no one can say that she is not a lady."

"No one in the world."

"Mamma will be furious, and really it is most absurd, but I will write her a nice little note. I am very fond of Pansy, after all."

But when Archie and the nice little note arrived at St. John's Wood he heard that Miss Grant had not stayed there; she had gone on at once to Dr. Grey's.

Of course Captain Croft followed her. He was shown into a pretty little study, and instead of Pansy he found himself confronted with an old gentleman in spectacles.

"My ward has gone out, Captain Croft. If you have any message from your sister pray entrust it to me."

"I have not come from Mrs. Seymour, but on business of my own. The fact is, Dr. Grey, I want you to give me your ward."

"To give you Pansy?"

"For my wife."

The doctor smiled.

"Well, if she is willing of course I am, but it is her father's consent that will be needed, not mine."

"I understood she was an orphan."

"She thought so for years, but when Mrs. Grant was on her death-bed she made some strange confessions respecting Pansy; in fact, she is not Pansy after all."

"Not Pansy?" bewildered.

"Don't disturb yourself, sir, my little girl has doubtless a grander title. There is no disgrace attaching to her birth, only from some romantic scruples she has refused to let us communicate with her father; however, though I do not know her real name I hold all the proofs of her birth."

Two hours later he unfolded the sealed packet in the presence of Pansy and her lover, and then Archie learned that his affianced bride was no other than his uncle's daughter, the Lady Heartsease Croft.

This changed none of their plans, excepting that the wedding instead of being a very quiet one was exceptionally grand, and all Archie's friends, instead of blaming him, thought him a very lucky fellow because he married Lord Lovel's heiress, the Lost Daughter.

#### THE SENSE OF SMELL.

THE olfactory nerve, although the first in anatomy, is, says the "Lancet," generally credited with being the least useful to man in a state of civilisation. Indeed, if we compare it with its more immediate associates—namely, the optic and auditory nerves, without which life, as we understand it now, could not be carried on—it seems to recede into an immeasurable distance.

If Prince Bismarck and M. Gambetta were to become suddenly blind and deaf, the destinies of Europe would no doubt be changed; while if these two men were to lose their smell and taste, things would probably go on much in the same manner as they do now. The sense of smell is, however, acknowledged to be of vital importance to animals. Sir John Lubbock has discovered that ants are, not only in their search for food, but also in their actions generally, guided by this sense, which resides in their antennae. It is by the smell that they recognise friends and foes, and are impelled to do their work; for with the exception of the winged queens and their husbands most ants are blind, and the world is

known to them only as a succession of different and well-defined smells. Some fish, like perch, trout, and salmon, are guided in their actions more by the sense of sight, which is largely developed in them; while the shark, on the other hand, is chiefly a smelling fish, its nose being so enormously developed that the mucous membrane of it if unfolded would cover an area of twelve feet square. In birds smell is rudimentary, and sight wonderfully keen; while moles have large organs of olfaction, and eyes scarcely indicated. Many herbivorous animals are enabled, by their keenly-developed sense of smell, to avoid poisonous plants, and select nutritious ones to feed upon. Smell to them is, as it were, the sentry of taste, guarding the approach to the palate. It informs animals of the manner in which a certain thing will affect them, so that they know what to seek and to avoid. It gives rabbits, hares, deer, and other animals which have to rely for their safety rather on rapidity of flight than on their strength, early notice of the approach of an enemy, and thus affords time for escape from danger.

The carnivorous class may, on the other hand, by the scent, detect their prey sooner, and surprise it more readily. A dog which is deprived of smell may almost be said to have ceased to be a dog, for that animal, as Schiff has shown by dissection of the nerves in puppies, loses with its smell its faculty of attachment and faithfulness to its master, whom it recognises and loves simply on account of his individual perfume. Schiff's deolfactorised puppies were throughout life indifferent to their master, although he treated them with the greatest kindness. No doubt the olfactory nerve is also of considerable use to man in a state of nature. The nostrils of negroes are particularly large, and contain capacities for increasing the olfactory surface which are not found in the Caucasian race. The olfactory nerve comes chiefly into play during our meals—indeed, we appreciate the flavours of meat and drink solely by the olfactory, and not, as is commonly believed, by the gustatory nerve, which latter conveys to us only the four fundamental tastes of sweet, bitter, acid, and saline, but no aromas or flavours. The art of dining would therefore be lost if we were to be deprived of the sense of smell. Tea, coffee, wine, and other articles of diet which are chiefly appreciated for their flavour, would greatly decline in popularity.

Dyspepsia and congestion of the liver would most likely increase rather than diminish if we had no smell, for though excesses at table are no doubt promoted by the pleasing flavour of the dishes put before us, and might, therefore, no longer occur in the same ratio as now, yet on the other hand, we should certainly often partake of unsuitable and indigestible food, more especially of putrid meat and fish, if ourselves and our cooks were unable to discriminate by smelling that which is nasty from that which is nice. Moreover, if eating gave us no pleasure, but were only done from necessity, we should probably fall into the habit of hurrying through our meals and bolting our food, which we know to be a prolific cause of indigestion. Another art which would decay if smell were lost is that of horticulture; for roses, jasmine, hyacinths, and many other fragrant flowers, are cultivated much more for the pleasure they afford to the nose than to the eye. Dr. Julius Althaus says: In 1863 a case came under my care in which there was complete anaesthesia of the fifth pair of cranial nerves, the patient being deprived of common sensation as well as of the senses of temperature, touch, and locality, all over the scalp, face, and in the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth, without any other disease whatever. In that case the mucous membrane of the nose was perfectly insensible to the touch of blunt or sharp instruments, and no sneezing was brought on by snuff; yet the sense of smell was perfectly normal, the patient having no difficulty whatever in appreciating the different varieties of scents with which I tested him. It was thus rendered evident that the olfactory nerve is quite independent of the other sensor nerves. Does this nerve respond specifically to the application of electricity?

This is an interesting question which has engaged the attention of the physiologists since the discovery of galvanism towards the end of the last century. It is well known that the optic nerve responds to the continuous voltaic current by the perception of flashes of light, the auditory by peculiar sounds, and the gustatory by a special taste. Any special sensorial response of the olfactory nerve, however, had not been observed until I demonstrated it in the patient to whose case I have just alluded as one of disease of the trigeminal nerve. The application of a current of thirty-five pairs of plates to the mucous membrane of the nose, which I found necessary to elicit a response of the olfactory nerve in that case, produces in persons who are in their ordinary health extreme pain, dazzling flashes of light, a hissing noise like that of a steam-engine, together with the faintness and giddiness. In the patient referred to, however, such a current could be easily borne on account of the anesthesia which was present; and in him the perception of a phosphorous smell occurred so constantly when this proceeding was used that it was rendered evident to me that the first nerve responds to a sufficiently powerful continuous current by the perception of such a peculiar smell.

## OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

**AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COACH.**—The carriage in which the recently married Crown Princess of Austria made her entry into Vienna is a marvel of the coach-builder's art. The carriage was built in the year 1700, at Madrid, for the Emperor Charles IV., in the rich baroque style then in fashion. It is lined within with crimson silk, and adorned with gold fringes. The roof is also similarly lined, and from its four corners hang tassels of gold. Round the edge of the roof is a great deal of elaborate bronze work, at the four corners are bunches of golden flowers, and vine tendrils, whilst over the centre of the whole is a gilt crown adorned with precious stones. On all sides are windows filled with venetian crystal glass; the pillars which support the roof are adorned with costly carved work, the panels inside below the windows bear painted representations of princely virtues. It is usually supposed that these paintings were the work of Rubens; such, however, is not the case; they were made in 1763 by the Viennese artist Wagenschön. The carriage swings by four straps, which are adorned with gold ornaments. Very conspicuous are the double imperial eagle, sword, sceptre and crown. What little wood work there is covered with red lacquer; all the iron work is gilded. The form of the spokes of the wheels is also noteworthy, they appear to be platted together, and were the work of a sculptor. The whole of the wheels and the axles are brilliantly lacquered. The harness of the six horses was of the same style as the carriage, adorned with silk and gold. The only other carriages of this kind anywhere in existence are one at Madrid and one in the Trinanon coach-house at Versailles.

**SLOW TRAVELLING.**—So shockingly bad were the roads in England that in 1703 when Prince George of Denmark went from Windsor to Petworth to meet Charles III. of Spain, the distance being about forty miles, he required fourteen hours for the journey, the last nine miles taking six. The person who records this fact says that the long time was the more surprising as, except when over-turned, or when stuck fast in the mire, his royal highness made no stop during the journey.

**HINDOO USE FOR A STEAM PLOUGH.**—According to Dr. George Birdwood, when a steam plough was introduced into the Presidency of Bombay it was borne in procession to the fields, wreathed with roses, while all who went to see

it were similarly adorned and sprinkled with attar as well. No practical use, however, was made of the implement, but after a time it was placed in the village temple, where it had its great steel share bedaubed red, and was thenceforward worshipped as a god.

**MARRIAGE AT THE CHURCH PORCH.**—In mediæval times priests thought it sacrilege to celebrate marriages within the church, and they were solemnised at the church door or lych gate. In 1559, Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II. of France, was married to Philip II., King of Spain, by the Bishop of Paris, at the door of Notre Dame.

**A NOTE ON PORTUGAL.**—"Female beauty is rare throughout Portugal," says an English traveller, "and of that encountered in the port wine capital the larger share certainly pertains to the peasantry of the environs. At the principal theatre of the city, after a minute inspection of the boxes, it is possible to count upon the fingers of a single hand the few pretty faces you will have succeeded in discovering, and the process may be repeated night after night. Ladies still go to the theatres here in the old-fashioned Sedan chairs, the unexpected apparition of which, with their quaintly attired chairmen, in one of the more ancient tortuous streets relegates one back for at least a century. These dimly-lighted, long, narrow, winding thoroughfares would appear to be slightly dangerous at night time, judging from their being regularly patrolled by helmeted horse-guards with drawn swords, who, from the slow pace at which they move, have been irreverently nicknamed 'tor-toise' by the Portuguese. Why the latter have given the name of 'mussels' to the guardians of the peace posted after dark with their loaded rifles at the end of many of these thoroughfares is less comprehensible."

**GIRDLE OF MARIE LOUISE.**—This ceinture, presented to her by the first Napoleon, was made of gold, the design being classic, of the style of the Emperor, formed of two narrow bands of open work set with pearls in the form of the Greek honeysuckle at the edges, and joining at the centre with a large antique onyx cameo of Apollo and a Muse, from which hangs a long pendant, increasing in width down to the lowest edge, where it is ornamented with five imperial crowns, each having a tassel of loose pearls. The pendant, being flexible, is made of broad, open-work links of two patterns, repeated alternately and gradually larger from the waist downwards. The one of these is a sort of true lovers' knot, enclosing a wreath with a star of gold; the other, a wreath with the Napoleon Bee; the edges ornamented throughout with honeysuckle ornament in pearls set à jour, giving the utmost elegance and finish to this beautiful girl.

**BOY-AND-GIRL MARRIAGE.**—Pepys records in his Diary that "a Bluecoat boy and girl were each left a fortune by two wealthy citizens. The extraordinariness of this occurrence led some of the magistrates to carry it to a match, which ended in a public wedding—he in his habit of blue satin, led by two of the girls, she in blue with apron green and petticoat yellow, all of sarsenet, led by two of the boys of the house, through Cheapside to the Guildhall Chapel, where they were married by the Dean of St. Paul's, she being given away by the Lord Mayor. The wedding dinner was kept in the Hospital Hall." The date of this juvenile wedding was September 20, 1695.

**A SCOTTISH BEGGAR IN THE OLDEN TIME.**—This man, who flourished in the West of Scotland, was known under the familiar cognomen of Cabbage Charlie. He was a mendicant on a wholesale plan of operation. Not contented with his own simple exertions he kept a numerous band of beggars in pay, who went abroad as his servants throughout the county, and who, coming back to the appointed rendezvous at the end of the week, gave up all the proceeds of their industry to him, and received a certain allowance, previously agreed upon, amounting to from ten to fifteen shillings per week. By a talent that might not have disgraced more celebrated names, he contrived to organise and reduce to a perfect system what would appear almost im-

practicable, considering the habits of those with whom he had to deal. He even found means of detecting the smallest dishonesty on the part of his men, and he acquired such a strange influence over them that they durst make no remonstrance against the severity of his rules nor complain of the penalties and taxes to which he sometimes subjected them.

**THE RAPHAEL OF THE CATS.**—Godfrey Mind, a Bernese painter, who died in the year 1814, has been surnamed the Raphael of the Cats, because he excelled in painting these animals, for whom, moreover, he entertained a lively affection. He had always several round him. "During his hours of work," says M. Depping, a traveller, "his favourite cat was almost always by his side, and he used to keep up a sort of conversation with her. Sometimes she occupied his knees, while two or three kittens would perch themselves on his shoulders, and he would remain in a fixed attitude for entire hours without venturing to stir hand or foot, lest he should disturb the companions of his solitude."

**JAPANESE HOUSE MATS.**—Japanese house mats, says Miss Bird in her work on Japan, are as neat, refined, and soft a covering for the floor as the finest Axminster carpet. They are five feet nine inches long, three feet broad, and two and a half inches thick. The frame is solidly made of coarse straw, and with very fine woven matting, as nearly white as possible, and each mat is usually bound with dark blue cloth. Temples and rooms are measured by the number of mats they contain, and rooms must be built for the mats, as they are never cut to the rooms. They are always level with the polished grooves or ledges which surround the floor. They are soft and elastic, and the finer qualities are very beautiful. They are as expensive as the best Brussels carpet, and the Japanese take great pride in them, and are much aggrieved by the way in which some thoughtless foreigners stamp over them with dirty boots.

**MUSIC IN LANCASHIRE.**—One of the Lancashire people's chief delights, says Edwin Waugh, is the practice of sacred music, and I have heard the great works of Haydn, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven executed with remarkable correctness and taste, in the lonely farmhouses and cottages of South Lancashire. In no other part of England does such an intense love of sacred music pervade the poorer classes. It is not uncommon for them to come from the farthest extremity of South Lancashire, and even over the "edge" from Huddersfield and the border towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire, to hear an oratorio at the Free Trade Hall, returning again, sometimes a distance of thirty miles, in the morning.

**AN HISTORICAL BEDSTEAD.**—Round the cornice of a bed, said to have been slept in by Cromwell, at Marple Hall, near Stockport, which was the home of Bradshaw the regicide, is the following couplet:

"Who, loveth not mercy, mercy shall miss,  
But he shall have mercy who merciful is."

**A VALUABLE CABINET.**—In the early part of last century a Mr. Sutherland, of Edinburgh, made the collection of coins his hobby, and amassed one of the most complete "sets" in Scotland. These were arranged in an old cabinet that seems to have been but thought little of at that time. Ere long the coins and cabinets passed into the hands of the Faculty of Advocates, and adorned their rooms at Parliament House. In the meantime it would appear that some "canny" members of the Scotch Antiquarian Society had their eyes on this "little lot," and the next step in the story tells of the purchase of this little treasure—the cabinet being put in at £50! By this time experts declared the latter to be something very choice and valuable, in consequence of which offers came at three and four figures. The antiquaries, in a very stern manner, disregarded such idle talk, until two offers of £3,000 turned up. They applied to the Treasury for permission to turn the article into money. A permit having been obtained, one of the applicants bid to £3,500, and the lot was then knocked down to the highest bidder.



# FACE-PIE.

## "DENUDATION."

NINCE (after a header): "Oh, aunt, you're not coming in with your spectacles on?"  
AUNT CLARISSA (who is not used to bathe in the "open"): "My dear, I positively won't take off anything more, I'm determined!"  
Punch.

GRATUITOUS INSULT.—Asking a bald-headed man to join the Society for the Preservation of Open Spaces.  
Punch.

THE PROPER THING FOR ABDUR-RAHMAN.—Abdur-cation.  
Punch.

A SHOOTING-BOX.—An infernal machine.  
Punch.

THE END OF THE SEAS-ON.—Getting to Calais!  
Punch.

THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD.—The time of courtship.  
Moonshine.

THE PROPER SEAT FOR BRADLAUGH.—The stool of repentance.  
Moonshine.

A GRAVE PIER.—Lord Bury.  
Moonshine.

## WANTED TO KNOW.

WHETHER it hurts much when one is struck by a thought?

Whether the roll of fame is filling at the price?

Whether some odd silver discovered in one's waistcoat pocket can be properly described as "vested interests"?

Whether the skinny spring chicken your poultier sends you is a species of the mocking-bird?

Whether, when a young fellow is sent to sea in order that he may sow his wild oats, he can be said to cast his bread upon the waters?

Whether a watch that is fitted with a second-hand must therefore be a second-hand watch?

Whether a neuralgic affection can be said to be spasmodic love?  
Judy.

## "GONE, I SAY!"

WHY is a waiter and a clergyman so very much alike?—Well, you know, because they both wear white ties, and both take orders.  
Judy.

NICEST CLEANING FOR THE HOT WEATHER.—Sweeping the horizon with a glass.  
Judy.

## MORE MORAL MAKING.

LOVE, we are told, is blind, yet is matrimony frequently an eye-opener.

Flattery is the "glycerine and honey" soap of life; compliments the bubbles blown from it.

Poeta nascitur, non fit, is a time-honoured maxim; yet is the inspiration of some of our modern poets frequently g-inspiration.

Never take a nap when travelling, the train always runs over sleepers.

Life is but too frequently like one's shirt-bout: both hang by a thread.

"Fancy" goods are very often just the sort of goods that customers do not fancy.

Few are the folks who are wise in their generation; on the other hand, many are those who are otherwise.

Woman, lovely woman, may sometimes be angry if you tell her you love her; she will be more angry, though, if you say that you don't.  
Judy.

A BIG Moustache makes a hair-lip.  
Fun.

TWO-WHIST ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1881.

BRACELETS of various patterns, in both gold and silver, will be worn this season. Hand-cuffs are also general in criminal circles.  
Fun.

## WELL BROUGHT UP.

SCENE—Bow Street Police Court.

OLD GENT (to boy who has told him all about it): "You seem a sharp lad. Where were you brought up?"

SHARP LAD: "I was brought up at the Old

Bailey last; but I been brought up here lots o' times before it were shut up."  
Fun.

## SOME "DON'TS" WORTH KNOWING.

Don't go to "Mold" if you want a "dip."  
Don't go to "Beer" if you want a watering-place pure and simple.

Don't go to "Broad-stares" if you want a "quiet-looking" resort.

Don't go to the sands of the "Dee" if you want the "Ces."

Don't go to "Deal" unless it's your turn.

Don't go to "Freshwater" if you prefer salt.

Don't go to "Loos" unless you have unlimited funds.

Don't go to any port unless it's strongly recommended by your wine merchant.

Don't go to "Cowes" if you are ordered a mutton diet.

Don't go to the "Scilly" Islands when the Wye's much nearer at hand.

Don't go to St. Bees unless you have some "buzziness" to transact.

Don't go to "Ryde" if you are resolved to take a knapsack and walk.  
Fun.

## A HIT OF "WHIT-BY" JOVE.

WHITBY is, of course, famous for its jet; but those who have not visited it will be scarcely prepared to hear that this natural production so permeates the town and neighbourhood that even the "pier" is of a decidedly "jetty" type. It is unlucky, too, when an inhabitant looks black at you, for "looking black" is the local equivalent for the "jet-tatura" or "evil eye" of the Italians.  
Fun.

## A DESIRABLE SPOT.

YOUNG LADY: "This seems to be a very healthy part of the country."

FIRST INHABITANT: "Healthy! Their ain't a single livin' person 'dead' sinst I bin 'ere!"

2ND L.: "No; an' the village is neat an' handsome, considering it's so plain, miss."

1ST L.: "An' their ain't a smaller village in England as kin beat it for size."

2ND L.: "Ah! what more can any one want 'cept the price o' summat to drink?"  
Fun.

EYE-LET HOLDS.—"Arry says the only 'eye let' oles he knows of are the Margate attics, for which he pays a guinea a week and nothink to be found, not even his own cold vitals."  
Fun.

FOAM-MEN WORTHY OF OUR STEEL.—Touting boatmen.  
Fun.

A LITERAL MISTAKE.—Fancying the Dee-side is the sea-side.  
Fun.

THE Nihilists are possessed of a grim humour, if it be true that the Czar has lately received models of different weapons and engines of assassination, with a written request that he should select one to be used upon his own person. The idea savours somewhat of an advertising tailor sending various garments for selection. It is scarcely possible, however, the Czar would comply with the request, as, coming from such a source, he would be tempted to exclaim, "Ex nihilo, nihil fit!"  
Funny Folks.

A CAMBRIDGE clergyman is cited for publishing his own marriage banns. It reminds me of the old-school bishop, who, being asked if a clerk could marry himself, counter-queried his interlocutor with "Can you bury yourself?" in sepulchral accents.  
Funny Folks.

THE ONLY LEAVES A SOLDIER LIKES TO TURN OVER.—Leaves of absence.  
Funny Folks.

AN OB-SKEWER POSITION.—That of the cat's-meat man.  
Funny Folks.

THE FARMER'S BEST VEST.—The har-vest.  
Funny Folks.

"QUEER" QUERY.—Can an ever-ailing person be "known well" to anybody?  
Funny Folks.

## "WITCH IT IS."

WHY is horological science very similar to magic?—Because one is watchcraft and the other witchcraft.  
Funny Folks.

## AN IRISH "HOLDING."

IBATE SPORTSMAN: "Confound it, you've shot the dog! I thought you told me you could hold a gun?"

PAT: "Shure, and so I can, your honour. It's the shot, sorr, I couldn't hold!"  
Funny Folks.

PARLIAMENTARY COMPLAINT.—"Land Bill".iousness.  
Funny Folks.

## SURE TO BE READ.

THE Christmas books of 1881 will include a birthday book by the Princess Beatrice. It will, of course, in dimensions, be a Royal octavo.  
Funny Folks.

THE OLDEST OF ALL SEASIDE PROMENADES.—The Sands of Time.  
Funny Folks.

"PURSE-GRABLY CONDUCTED."—A business on cash principles.  
Funny Folks.

## A REVOLUTIONARY HEROINE.

HE: "There you are; a woman who turns more heads than any in the grounds."

SHE: "Impossible! She's so ugly!"

HE: "Nevertheless it's true; for she keeps the steam merry-go-round!"  
Funny Folks.

FASHION ITEM: "Which had you rather be, a twinkling star in the heavens, or a comet that with its broad train of fire sweeps in majestic course through unknown space?" "I should prefer by all means to wear a train," said she; "but not in unknown space. It would never be described in the newspapers."

# THE HEATHER BELLS.

## A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

Along the banks of the winding river Ayr, in Scotland, stood a little cottage with white-washed walls, small windows, and thatched roof.

It stood at the base of a steep hill, which made a picturesque background, whilst in the meadow beyond, a short distance from the village road, sparkled and flowed in the sunshine the murmuring river Ayr, the sound of its noisy waters being distinctly heard by the inmates of the cottage as it dashed against or kissed the pebbled shore.

In this humble home lived Robin Grey with his wife and three daughters. Jennie, Robin's wife, had been a waiting-maid to Lady Claire at the castle before her marriage, and being a great favourite with the lady and her children, frequently visited her at her magnificent home that towered majestically upon the distant cliff, its white battlements standing out boldly, as it were, against the blue sky, whilst the rocks, as they darted in and out of the rookery, could be distinctly seen and their cawing heard by the inmates of the cottage as they sat at their door in the summer twilight when the day's work was done.

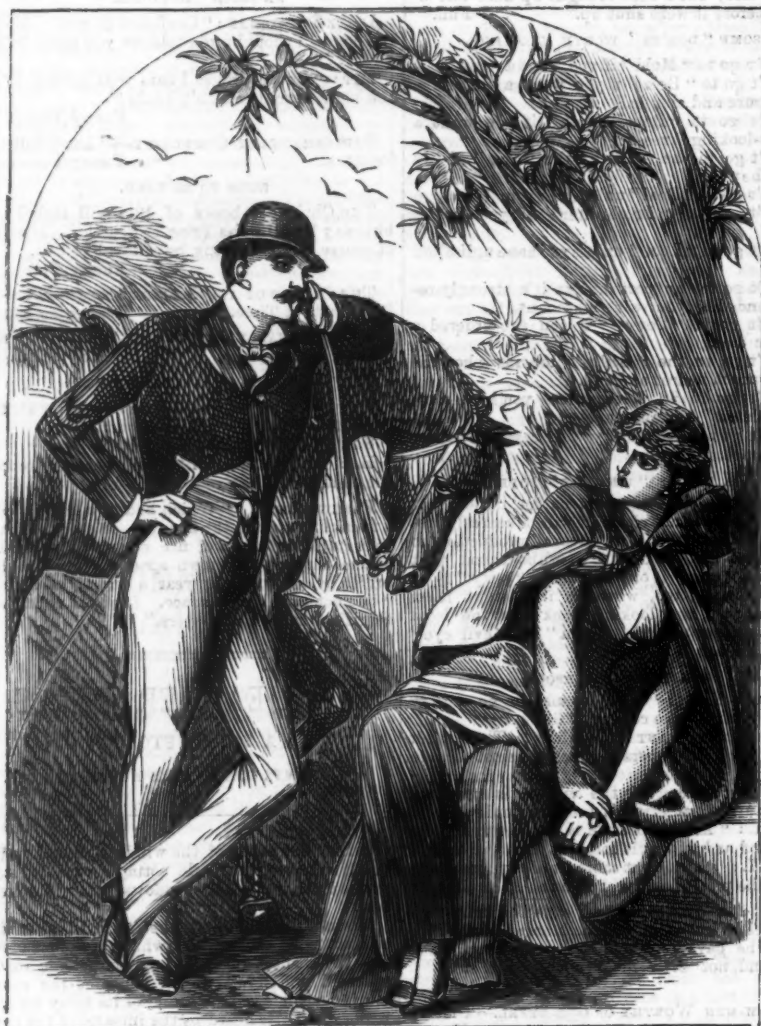
Robin's three daughters were the admiration of the entire country around for their beauty and intelligence.

Their mother, who had been well educated for one in her station by Lady Claire, had imparted her knowledge to her children, and made them appear far more refined than the children of the cottagers around.

Mary, the eldest, was a blonde, tall, fair, and handsome, whilst Edith, the second, was still more beautiful; but the baby (Ellen), as they delighted to call her, even when she was grown to womanhood, was the fairest of the three, and the one altogether charming.

She had lovely, liquid blue eyes, with fair skin, exquisite features, and hair as wavy and golden as it could be, whilst her tender words and loving smiles added a charm to all.

The sisters were chosen in the village every



[FROM HIS HIGH ESTATE.]

Mayday by turns for the queen, and at the annual ball, given to the cottagers by Lady Claire, where the three appeared together at a gathering, Sir Percy (Lady Claire's second son) was so charmed by their beauty that he declared they were as lovely as the heather bells they wore in their hair; and ever after the villagers, in remembrance of Sir Percy's compliment, called the three sisters the "heather bells."

Mary, the eldest, a quiet, sensible girl, was not so vain as her younger sisters, and married when quite young Alec Forbes, the second gardener at the castle. They lived near in a pretty, humble cottage. Alec was an honest Scotchman, much respected by all who knew him.

Mary was contented and happy in the sphere to which she was best adapted, satisfied with her good husband and lovely, sunny-haired little ones.

The interior of the cottage in the winter evenings always presented a scene of comfort and happiness which might be envied by the rich and great.

As Alec sat by his bright hearth fire, with a wee bairn upon each knee, whilst his sweet wife sat opposite at the spinning wheel, the sparkling flames heightened the roses upon her cheeks, whilst with loving smiles and pleasant words she responded to the remarks of her fair-haired little ones.

No matter to Alec how the wind whistled amongst the crags or down the glen or around the cottage when all was sunshine within. No

stories connected with the rich or great ever made him dissatisfied with his humble lot.

"They maun hae many a grand thing amongst them, lassie," he would often say to his wife, "but I dinna think they be happier than we; the gude Laird hae given us a plenty of this world's goods, and we hae na richt to ask fa' more."

"True, Alec, we hae much to be thankful for, and I am content."

So their happy lives flowed on, the sun of their existence growing brighter and brighter toward the perfect day. God, in His inestimable goodness, did not pass them by in the distribution of His blessings, but gave them an abundance of earthly happiness.

Edith, the second daughter, was employed as a waiting-maid by a Mrs. Stewart, the rector's wife, at the village.

She was a beautiful girl, sensible and modest. The family of the minister was as much attached to her as if she were one of them, and bestowed upon her many favours.

She attracted the attention of James Bruce, the village schoolmaster, a tall, dark-complexioned young man, handsome and intelligent. He soon became desperately in love with the fair Edith, and made her an offer of marriage; he was accepted, for she too was captivated. In his visits to the rectory he would instruct her, and the apt pupil made wonderful progress in learning.

Time flowed on smoothly with the happy,

ardent lovers until some months after their engagement, when Robert MacDonald, the rector's wife's brother, came to visit at the rectory.

He was a man who had passed fifty, proud, silent and stern. He had been for many years a wanderer from his native land, and had seen a little of ladies' society. His attention was at once attracted toward the lovely blonde, and he was soon deeply in love with her.

He was not slow in making known his intentions toward her, and offered to lay his fortune at her feet.

The rector's wife was at first shocked, in spite of her fondness for Edith, at her brother's condescension in wanting to marry a girl in her sphere; but her character was irreproachable, and there was no stain upon the name of her family.

Understanding the firmness of her brother's character she at last consented, whilst the good rector, knowing of her engagement, declared the proceedings very dishonourable, and said he washed his hands of the entire business.

But Edith amazed them all by refusing the elderly gentleman, and clung more assiduously to her handsome young lover. This enraged Mr. MacDonald, and he bribed his sister by costly presents to aid him in his suit.

The rector's lady condescended to visit frequently the parents of Edith and point out the advantages of such a brilliant alliance. The determined lover presented Robin Grey and his wife with a new cottage close by the old one, and bought their consent by many gifts.

Honest Robin was slow to consent, but having been crippled by an accident which rendered him almost unfit for labour, he was, in his helplessness, at last won over by his ambitious wife and the persuasive eloquence of the winning Mrs. Stewart.

"Alack, alack!" he would say, shaking his head sadly, "I am afraid nae gude'll come of it, for the lassie's heart is with the young man."

At last the poor young creature was over-persuaded, and, unable longer to resist the certainty of a cruel fate, renounced the young man and accepted her wealthy lover.

After their joyless wedding he took his bride to his magnificent abode in the south of Scotland, far from friends and home. Here she was surrounded by every splendour, and placed in command of everything but happiness.

The lovely lady began to fade in the old ancestral halls. She tried hard to adapt herself to her new life and duties, but the effort was too much, the sacrifice too great, she began to wither, to die away.

Mr. MacDonald was a great student, spending much of his time among his books. When in the society of his beautiful young wife he was jealous and taciturn.

The lovely Edith's health failed. Her husband at last becoming alarmed, resolved to take her back to breathe her native air. The heart of the rector's wife was touched and moved to pity by the appearance of the poor creature, and in witnessing a change so short a time had made.

James Bruce, who had been almost broken-hearted at the loss of his treasure, and knowing all the circumstances, determined to rescue his injured darling, and revenge himself.

On hearing of her return he haunted all the walks near the rectory until he saw her. At the sight of her lover the love which she had tried to bury and imagine dead returned with all its former intensity.

"James," said she, in the agony of despair, "why did you come here?"

"To rescue you, my darling, from the life that is killing you! Flee, Edith, flee! We will go to America, to the new world, and come what may we will be happy."

"Tempt me not!" she cried, in her agony. "What would my parents and sisters say? Go away! For pity's sake, go away!"

"Come with me, Edith," said the tempter. "Come from misery and embrace happiness."

So he pleaded and persuaded. How hard it was for her to resist the love which was consuming her! When they parted she permitted



him to kiss her tempting lips, as he had done many times before in the happy bygone hours.

So they met often, until Edith, overcome by his entreaties, resolved, regardless of consequences, to go abroad with her lover.

James had by his industry laid up a small sum of money. This he resolved to take and go with Edith to America.

The night of their departure was set. She was to meet him upon the banks of the winding Ayr, at the loch, some distance from the village. A carriage would take them to a railroad station, from which they were to be conveyed to Liverpool, and from there take passage to America.

The night was clear and frosty, favouring the kindling of the stars. Edith arose and dressed quickly, then went to the window and looked through the open lattice abroad into space.

A queer feeling of dread and sadness came over her as she sat leaning her beautiful head upon her hand, gazing at the broad blue dome above, watching the stars as they kept their vigils in their silent watch on high.

Sighing deeply, she closed the window, and taking her scanty bundle, careful to leave all the elegant clothing and fine jewels which her husband had given her, she started forth down the dark, narrow back staircase of the rectory, across the hall, pausing to listen after she had drawn the bolt of the door lest she might be overheard.

The dog darted forward with a low bark as she attempted to pass him; she stooped and patted him, whilst the scalding tears fell upon the dumb creature's neck.

"Poor Rover!" she said, clasping her arms around his neck. "The chain which confines you to your kennel is still around your neck. I am severing mine for ever. Farewell! There is no time for regrets," she continued, wiping the tears from her eyes. "I must move on."

She passed on through the rectory garden, through the wicket gate to the old churchyard, and sat on one of the tombstones. It became very cold as the morning drew on.

The moon went down; the stars grew dim; the river ran with a livelier murmur, and she watched all the fine gradations of dawn, cloud, wind and grey sky; the gates of yellow and red burst open, and the sun came forth rejoicing. She arose and sped onward toward the loch. James was there, impatiently waiting. She entered the carriage, the horses dashed over the frosty road.

She was gone!

The entire country was aroused, and many efforts were made to rescue the fugitives. Great sympathy was expressed for Robin Grey and his wife and the bereaved husband. Why? The one bought and the other sold her. They had their reward.

Poor little Ellen was for a time almost broken-hearted over the fate of her sister, and would wander about over the hills and moors, the haunts she loved, in the agony of despair.

Edith, her sister, loved the moors; out of the blackest heath roses had bloomed for her, and poor little solitary Ellen felt a strange love for them for her sake.

One evening, as she sat upon a crag in the glen near the cottage, after one of her sad rambles, she heard the sound of the hunter's horn ringing through the hills and down the glen, then borne over the rippling Ayr.

As she sat listless and listening, a horseman rapidly approached down the highway. Soon after, a tall, dark-complexioned gentleman, dressed in a dark green hunting jacket, and mounted upon a red roan steed, dashed by.

He gave a hasty, surprised look at Ellen as he passed, as she sat upon a crag under a large spreading tree, with a spray of heather in her hand.

Her dark blue mantle was wrapped around her, whilst her hood had fallen back upon her shoulders, displaying her lovely face, with its fair skin, large blue eyes, and perfect features, whilst her golden curls adorned her lovely head like a sun-lighted cloud.

His hasty glance ended in a broad stare; finally he stopped suddenly, turned his horse,

and approached and dismounted in front of the maid.

Taking the reins, he ran his arm through them and stood leaning with his back against his horse's neck, gazing with intense admiration on the beautiful creature.

"I beg pardon," he said, by way of opening the conversation, "but your lovely face is strangely familiar to me. May I venture, my little fairy, to ask your name?"

"Ellen Grey, of Glen Cottage," she replied.

"Do you know me, lassie?"

"Yes, sir; Sir Percy Claire, Lady Claire's second son."

"I have been abroad with my regiment for two years, you probably are aware of the fact, and I have just returned. I remember one evening, some three or four years ago, seeing the Misses Grey at the annual ball at the castle, (you were quite a little girl) and naming them the heather bells on account of their beauty and the heather bells they wore in their hair. Have you forgotten?"

"No, sir," answered Ellen, blushing deeply, and dropping her eyes as Sir Percy seated himself beside her.

"Nor I," said he, "and shall beg to be remembered in the light of an old friend. You have grown, if possible, more beautiful than you were before I went away," said he, looking admiringly at her lovely face. "Do you observe any change in me?"

"Only for the better, sir."

"You are a little flatterer, I am afraid," he exclaimed, laughing. "Why don't you speak Scotch, lassie? You speak good English."

"The rector's lady, and mamma and Lady Claire have taught me to speak like them," she answered.

"I can't forgive them, for I admire my native tongue, and regret that I have been taught to relinquish my Scotch dialect."

"I find myself using a Scotch word now and then," Ellen replied.

"That is right; don't ignore home language altogether; I am home now on leave of absence, and want to see as much of your charming society as I can whilst I am here. You will meet your old friend to-morrow here at the same time and place, won't you?"

Ellen hesitated; there would be no harm in meeting Sir Percy, she thought, he was so grand and clever.

"I will," she answered.

Ellen sat long upon the crag after the handsome knight had left her. He was so magnificent, she thought, for all the world like the gentlemen she read of in the old novels that had been given by Lady Claire to her mother whilst she was employed at service at the castle, and which had been read by the little beauty, and put all sorts of romantic ideas into her head.

"I will meet him, of course; why shouldn't I? Maybe I am so beautiful that he may marry me, and then I shall be a great, grand lady, and papa and mamma shall never work any more, but be grand too," she said, rising and drawing her plaid around her shoulders.

At last she returned to her home, but her thoughts were with Sir Percy; he had won her innocent heart already.

The next afternoon she was punctually at the place of rendezvous. How kind, how insinuating, was the man of the world! How admiring and trusting was the innocent girl!

Alas! how can a man or woman win a heart to break it! How can they through their own self love be so cruel?

But it is and ever will be so with those who are utterly selfish. Such people are devoid of principle and feeling.

I have heard of men who have won the truest of friendships, accepted the kindest of favours, and rewarded them by insults and insolence. Such conduct is the refinement of cruelty.

Sir Percy Claire was determined to win the love of little Ellen only to blight it. She was an easy victim, tender, trusting, sensitive and loving. Who could have predicted that she should die young—she who was so gay and chattering—that her sun should set at noon?

Day after day he met her in the glen, a lonely, sequestered spot, well chosen by Sir Percy.

"Don't say anything to your parents about meeting me here, Ellen," he would say, "for fear they should not approve."

"But my parents think so well of you that they would trust you; besides, it does not appear right to me to deceive them."

"Nonsense! Old folks are always queer; they draw the reins so tight, forgetting they were ever young. Mine are just as bad, so for the present, my pretty little Ellen, we will keep our own counsel. Trust me, darling, and all will be well."

Ellen, thinking everything her ardent, handsome lover said must be true, reluctantly consented.

Time passed on. Sir Percy Claire's leave of absence was fast drawing to a close.

"Ellen," he said, when notifying her of the event, "I must leave here; but I love you as my life. Will you marry me and go abroad with me?"

"Yes," she said, trembling; "it will be far away from my parents and home, but with you I shall be happy anywhere, for I know you will be good and kind to me; and father and mother will trust me in your hands, I am sure."

"Now see, per, they must know nothing about it, for reasons which I will explain. My parents would separate us at once. We must run away, or rather you must go away with me secretly. We will get married before we leave Scotland"—fearing a refusal on the part of the honourable girl—"but keep it silent until the proper time for disclosing it arrives. It will be all right, you know, but our situation is peculiar. My parents desire me to marry Lady Grace Douglas. She is an heiress. It has been the wish of both families for years, and if they were to find out I was going to marry you they would separate us. On the other hand, your father, having no ambition, would think me too fine a lover for you since Edith's unfortunate marriage. I will pay James St. John to go on to America and circulate the story that you have gone away with him, and thus, my bonnie lassie, throw dust into their eyes until we get to my station on the Mediterranean coast. Then I'll write to them and settle the business."

So he argued and persuaded until he succeeded in getting the poor little creature to consent.

The night for Baby Ellen's departure was set. She was to meet Sir Percy with one of the villagers, James St. John, in the glen, go to a little church miles away, and be married and start with the handsome young officer for his military station.

The night of her departure Ellen had everything ready; her little bundle (for her wardrobe was scanty) was concealed by the door, there was nothing to impede her flight.

She kissed her parents more tenderly than usual when she bade them good night, trying hard to conceal from them the tears that would steal down her cheeks.

After all was still in Glen Cottage she slipped noiselessly out and ran quickly down to the glen. Sir Percy was there with James St. John, who was mounted upon the box with the driver.

"My darling," said her lover, as she approached, caressing her, "you have kept us waiting. I must hurry you away."

On they went over the moonlighted country; the carriage rattled noisily over the hard, frosty, November roads; everything in nature looked cold, grey, and chill. Ellen, silent and trembling, sat by the side of her handsome lover, who did his utmost to arouse her drooping spirits. At last the panting steeds were stopped in front of a low, dark-looking cottage. Sir Percy almost lifted Ellen out; they entered and were ushered in by an old lady, who wore a black wig, mounted with a black silk cap, and wore a shabby black stuff dress. She showed them into a dingy little parlour, where Mr. Allison, the mock parson, was waiting to receive them.

Sir Percy had changed his mind about being married in a church; it was too gloomy for little Ellen. She was pleased with his consideration for her. No questions were asked; the cere-

mony was performed and the certificate handed to Ellen, showing that all had been arranged beforehand.

It was dawn when they arrived at the railway station and took the train for London. James St. John had left them, and was on the way to Liverpool, whence his passage had been paid to America by Sir Percy.

The great city was bewildering to Ellen, with its dark, dingy streets and thoroughfares, palaces, towers, the churches so grand and magnificent that she had read about; now they were before her in reality.

The hotel where she stopped was under the shadow of St. Paul's. The whole affair appeared to her like a dream, a fairy scene passing before her bewildered fancy, like a phantom, yet a reality. It was difficult for her to adapt herself to her new station, and when the servants addressed her as my lady she felt as if the appellation belonged to another, not herself, and would start and stare at them as if they had made a mistake.

Alas for poor little Ellen!

They remained after leaving the great Babel a short time at Calais, then at Paris, and after this journeyed on to the coast of the Mediterranean.

Instead of Sir Percy taking Ellen with him to reside at the barracks where he was stationed, as most of the officers did, he took her to board with an old French woman at a cottage some distance away. Neither understood the other, but old Jean was kind, and tried to make the pretty, lonely creature as comfortable as she could. Sir Percy was not unkind of her comfort, was kind and attentive, but left her much alone. Oh! how lonely she was in a foreign land, hearing nothing but a foreign tongue! She would sit by the hour by the murmuring deep blue sea, watching the waves chasing each other as if frolicking into shore, dreaming of the loved ones far away in the valley of her home. At last she obtained her husband's permission to write to her parents; she explained all concerning her marriage, her journey and present surroundings, humbly imploring their pardon, and feeling in the meantime great pride in the consciousness of the joy which her brilliant match would afford them. She gave the letter to Sir Percy to post. But no answer ever came, because no letter ever went.

Time in the same monotonous routine rolled on.

One morning her husband, after they had been there some months, informed her that their regiment was ordered off, telling her he would be obliged to leave her at the cottage until his return, which would be soon.

Poor, unsuspecting Baby Ellen!

The morning of his departure came. He folded her again and again to her heart. She wept not when he pressed her to his young and beating heart, neither wept when he left her, for she knew that they must part. She stood secreted in the little garden to watch his regiment pass in all its military splendour; the banners waved, she heard the bugle call, the pageant passed, and strangers found her cold and senseless upon the ground. Old Jean carried her in and laid her upon the bed in her chamber, which for several days she was unable to leave.

One morning, when she was able to walk around the room, and beginning to feel the restless symptoms of desiring occupation which are noticeable in invalids recovering health, she was amusing and interesting herself by placing the few old books and papers which her husband had left in order, he deeming them of no importance; but as they were his, they were of great consequence to Ellen. Some fragments of letters she concluded to burn, but seeing one from Lady Claire to her son, and thinking it might contain some news from home relating to her family (especially her parents) about whom she was painfully solicitous, she commenced to read. Lady Claire spoke of her father and mother, saying:

"The poor people are now becoming reconciled

to little Baby Ellen's runaway match, as James St. John is a likely young man, and will doubtless make her a good husband. Why the silly little creature should have made a secret of it I cannot understand, for her parents have both assured me they would not have objected. I pity poor girls with pretty faces, for their beauty puts all sorts of romantic notions into their heads unbefitting their station, and causes endless trouble. I presume Ellen's mother had drilled the child into the idea that she was entitled to a gentleman for a husband, and she was afraid to tell her she was going to marry a poor man. Now, my son," she concluded, "all will be ready by the time you return for your marriage with Lady Grace. The dear girl is in Paris, buying her trousseau, but will return to-morrow. All the preparations at the castle are now complete. We are only adding the finishing touches."

She sat spellbound for a few moments with the letter in her hand, feeling weak and dizzy. She aroused herself, and again looked at the date. It was recent; the day of his marriage was fixed in June. It would give her scarcely time to get home, she thought, to prevent it.

"But I will see him, and ask him how he could treat me so ill," she argued. "I will expose him for his cruelty."

Alas! Poor, friendless Ellen, what redress had she? A woman may be injured and forced to suffer in silence, whilst the perpetrator of her misfortunes goes unpunished, prosperous, and happy.

There was an English steamer due; if she could take passage upon it she would reach Scotland before the marriage. There was no time to be lost. She had money sufficient for her purpose.

Summoning Jean, and telling her of her intention of leaving, although carefully concealing the cause, she prepared to go. The old woman was a careful observer, and having no faith in the handsome young officer, guessed the truth. She and Ellen now understood each other, as Ellen had learned enough French to make herself understood.

"Adieu, dear Jean," she said, embracing her; "you have been very kind to me. I will not forget you; if I live, I will return to thank you."

But she returned not again.

The good old woman stood upon the dock waving her handkerchief to her until the steamer was far out to sea, when Ellen was all alone on the great ship which was bearing her home.

She kept quietly to herself, but, in spite of her utmost endeavours, her beauty made her the object of much notice, and although carefully concealing her story, yet her sad, pale face made it evident to all that she was suffering, and the tender-hearted did all in their power to render her journey agreeable.

She was timid and shy, aware that she was the subject of remark and of pity.

When she arrived in London, an old lady, who felt a great sympathy for the poor young creature, proffered her services. Ellen accepted the favour, which was to enable her to reach the proper railroad station to convey her to her home.

The good old lady gladly acquiesced, her husband taking her himself to the train and seeing that all things were properly cared for her journey. The country through which she passed was extremely beautiful. The balmy air floated through the open carriage windows, but she heeded it not.

When she arrived at her home it was night; the moon shone calmly down upon hill and valley in mild splendour.

She was hungry and faint, but feeling a want of confidence in her strength, she determined not to waste any time, but go first to her home and peep in through the open windows and see if all was the same.

She approached the cottage. Slowly she opened the garden gate and entered. Her father and mother sat opposite each other at the snowy deal table, on which a tempting supper was served.

Dare she enter? She peeped through the lattice, whilst the tears rolled down her wasted cheeks, and her whole frame shook with her agitated feelings.

Her parents were little changed in their appearance, except that there was an expression of sadness upon her father's face which was foreign to the former cheerful, open countenance.

She had written her story, placing it in an envelope with her mock certificate, intending to leave them upon the door-step of the cottage, so that those whom we love as we love no other might be certain of her innocence.

How she longed to embrace them and lay her weary head upon her mother's breast! She dared not approach. She was as much of an orphan as one who had lost her parents. Poor, solitary thing!

It was Sir Percy's wedding. The ceremony was to be performed early in the evening. There was no time to be lost if she was to be there in time to expose him to his bride. In spite of her strong resolution to hurry away, she lingered until her father came toward the door and said:

"Hark ye, wife! I think I hear some ungreeting."

"Nonsense, Robin! Dinna talk sne foolish."

"Ah, weel, ye mon be richt, for who would come a-greeting here?" said he, seating himself.

It was dangerous for her to stay, and placing the package in the intended place she noiselessly hurried away, the tears blinding her eyes so that she would have lost her way had not the path been so familiar.

When she reached the park gates she found them wide open, showing that there was something unusual going on. She walked as quickly as she could with her wasted strength up the broad, beautiful avenue to the castle.

Presently the great white pile, with its high towers, stood boldly out before her. It appeared all a flame, a broad illumination; every window shone with light.

She passed across the lawn and leaned against a statue for support whilst she contemplated the brilliant scene, trying also to summon up strength to go forward upon her mission and expose her cruel betrayer.

Her traitor courage faltered, as any truly sensitive woman's will, giving the villain who causes her sorrow a chance to carry out his plans after he has blighted her prospects and ruined her happiness. If such creatures prosper on earth, surely they must be punished in the world to come.

She heard the bridal march as the sound floated through the open casement, and crossing the lawn and mounting the terrace, her face was even with the broad, tessellated floor of the balcony.

She could see all within the magnificent drawing-rooms, but was unseen herself. They were gorgeously furnished in crimson and gold, whilst the many lights from the chandeliers fell upon the most exquisite carpets.

The back rooms were two or three steps higher than the front. Down these came the bridal train. When she saw Sir Percy in his happiness her sight grew dizzy, and as the kind old clergyman of the village finished the prayer (after the ceremony) with a blessing, she gave one heart-rending scream and fell upon the ground. The sight broke the heart of Ellen.

The sound rang through crag and moor, down the valley, sobbing away in the distance o'er the river Ayr. All paused for a moment as the cry filled the halls.

"What a sobbing sound!" said one to his neighbour.

"Only a hound, no doubt," was the careless reply.

The revellers remained until far into the night. All, even to the servants, were rejoicing with Sir Percy in his happiness.

Ellen was found when the morning dawned cold and lifeless upon the ground.

Such was the fate of the three sisters whom Sir Percy, as a compliment to their beauty, styled the three heather bells.

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## GEMS OF THOUGHT.

THE first step towards making a man of your son is to train him to earn what he spends; the next best step is to train him how to save his earnings.

WHEN a man dies men inquire what he has left behind him; angels inquire what he has sent before him.

THEY that will not be counselled cannot be helped. If you do not hear reason, she will rap your knuckles.

WHEN you speak evil of another, you must be prepared to have others speak it of you. There is an old Buddhist proverb which says: "He who indulges in enmity is like one who throws ashes to windward, which come back to the same place and cover him all over."

HE who betrays another's secret because he has quarrelled with him was never worthy of the name of friend; a breach of kindness will not justify a breach of trust.

ACCORDING to Zeno, it is a very suggestive fact that we have two ears and only one tongue. It is better to listen than to talk, and always safe to tell no more than half we hear.

AN injury unanswered in time grows weary of itself and dies away in an involuntary remorse. In bad dispositions, capable of no restraint but fear, it has a different effect—the silent digestion of one wrong provokes a second.

## STATISTICS.

CENSUS OF VICTORIA.—The approximate return issued by the Government statist at Melbourne gives the population of Victoria on April 3, 1881, at 843,977, composed of 435,186 males and 407,791 females. These numbers are exclusive of 11,835 Chinese (of whom only 196 are women), and 770 aborigines. The number of dwellings in the colony is 181,551, of which 170,019 are inhabited, 10,643 uninhabited, and 894 building. Melbourne, the capital, has a population of 65,675; and here the sexes are tolerably equal, 33,289 males to 32,386 females. There are also 610 Chinese. The cities or towns in the colony with a population of over 20,000 are the following: Ballarat, 22,425; Collingwood, 23,797; Emerald Hill, 25,178; Fitzroy, 23,979; Prahran, 20,306; Richmond, 23,294; and Sandhurst, 23,128. In 1836 the population of the whole colony was 224; in 1838, 3,511; in 1841, 11,738; in 1846, 32,879; in 1851, 77,345; in 1861, 540,322; in 1871, 731,528; in 1881, 853,532.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

## SUMMER DRINKS.

THE "Chemist and Druggist" gives the following receipts for these seasonable beverages:

Ginger Beer.—Brown sugar, two pounds; boiling water, two gallons; cream of tartar, one ounce; bruised ginger, two ounces. Infuse the ginger in the boiling water, add the sugar and cream of tartar; when lukewarm strain, then add one half-pint of good yeast. Let it stand all night, then bottle. If desired a lemon may be added, and it may be clarified by the white of one egg.

Lemon Beer.—Sugar, one pound; boiling water, one gallon; one sliced lemon; bruised ginger, one ounce; yeast, one teacupful. Let it stand twelve to twenty hours, after which it may be bottled.

Hop Beer.—Sugar, four pounds; hops, six ounces; ginger, bruised, four ounces. Boil the hops for three hours with five quarts of water, then strain; add five more quarts of water and

the ginger, boil a little longer, again strain, add the sugar, and when lukewarm add one pint of yeast. After twenty-four hours it will be ready for bottling.

Spruce Beer.—Hops, two ounces; sassafras, in chips, two ounces; water, ten gallons. Boil half an hour, strain, and add brown sugar, seven pounds; essence of spruce, one ounce; essence of ginger, one ounce; pimento, ground, one-half ounce. Put the whole in a cask, and let cool; then add one-half pint of yeast, let stand twenty-four hours, then bottle it.

## MAKING HAY.

Out in the meadow tossing the hay,  
Rich with the scent of clover,  
Out in the meadow the livelong day,  
Turning the grasses over,  
Robert is busily working away  
From morn until day's declining;  
Working away and making hay  
While the summer sun is shining!

He whistles and sings, for his heart is  
light,  
And gay as the sunshine o'er him;  
And smiles illumine his face so bright,  
As he tosses the hay before him;  
And in and out through his thoughts all  
day  
Are fancies their threads entwining,  
While he's working away and making hay  
While the sun is brightly shining.

Winds of summer are ready to blow  
Over the grasses and under,  
As soon as the farmer chooses to go  
And scatter the heaps asunder;  
And out on the highroad far away,  
The perfumed message divining,  
Someone will say "They're making hay!  
And brightly the sun is shining!"

Then after the toil of the day is done,  
The cattle are under cover,  
When low in the West declines the sun,  
Where goeth the farmer lover?  
Toward the village he takes his way,  
His heart with a message laden;  
For the lad so gay has something to say  
To-night to a certain maiden.

And under the happy evening skies,  
In the glorious summer weather,  
With stars a-gleam in each other's eyes,  
They wander away together.  
And should you meet them—perchance you  
may—

You'd know by her blush so charming,  
That Love has a way of making hay  
Unknown to the rules of farming. J. P.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

A PAUPER woman, stated to be 105 years of age, died the other day at Plymouth. Her husband, then an old man, died 55 years ago.

THE Chinese Immigration Bill, imposing a poll-tax of £10, has passed both Houses of the New Zealand Parliament.

PRINCE LEOPOLD will preside at the 217th anniversary festival of the Scottish Corporation, to be held on St. Andrew's Day, the 30th of November next.

A QUARTER of a century ago whiskey was the national drink of the United States. This has now given place to beer; and the Americans, next to ourselves and the Germans, are the largest beer producers in the world.

THE gold medal offered by the Royal Agricultural Society of England for the best sheaf-binder has been awarded to Mr. McCormick, an American agricultural implement maker.

LADY BECTIVA has published a pamphlet on

the present condition of the wool trade, in which she appeals to the ladies of England to use English woollen fabrics in preference to those of foreign make.

PRIVATE CAMERON, of the Queen's Westminster, has succeeded in carrying off the Ride Championship of Middlesex with an aggregate score of 245. The third and final contest for the honour took place at the Government range, Wormwood Scrubbs.

A MAN named Fullard, a farm labourer, at Gringley, near Retford, was bitten by a horse fly a few days ago. No notice of the bite was taken at the time, but swelling set in, and subsequently mortification and death resulted.

NEW YORK city has the only Jewish daily paper in the world. It is the "Daily Jewish Gazette," published by K. H. Sarasohn, and is sold for two cents a copy. It has a circulation of 2,600 copies daily, and is printed in Hebrew characters.

THE latest about American competition comes from Canada. It is to the effect that the wheat-producing land in Manitoba and the Canadian far West is extensive enough to support a population of 1,000,000 persons and to feed all Europe. A railroad is to be constructed to connect the province with Hudson's Bay, and when it is made it is estimated that wheat will be sold, with a handsome profit, at Liverpool, for 23s. per quarter.

MR. ALFRED WILKS, a retired coppersmith, who committed suicide a few days ago, has bequeathed his property, estimated at £100,000, on trust for the use of his two sisters during their lifetime, with reversion of the property on their death in trust to the Midland Institute and General Hospital.

THE hearts of Biblical scholars have been gladdened by a grand collection of 49 MSS., lately purchased by the British Museum, which include among others, two MSS. of parts of the Hebrew Scriptures of older date than any known to be in existence. There are MSS. of the Greek Septuagint of about the same date.

THE Bible used by Martin Luther in making his translation has recently been discovered in a village of Bohemia. It is covered with marginal notes in handwriting. It formerly belonged to the Royal Library at Dresden. The possessor has been offered 750 dollars for it by the university at Leipzig, but has refused the offer.

A SIMPLE and ingenious machine has been patented in Leeds, by which tradesmen's labels, of whatever material they consist, can be folded, punched, eyeleted, and delivered with much rapidity in one operation. It is claimed on behalf of the new machine that it can turn out neatly finished labels at the rate of from 3,000 to 4,000 per hour.

AN Armenian paper, the "Nishak," published at Tiflis, recounts the discovery in the neighbouring forests of a veritable wild man of the woods—a human being, speaking no language, completely naked, but with body, limbs and face covered with hair. His nationality is unknown, and as he seems incapable of uttering articulate sounds it is likely to remain so. An attempt to clothe him met with no success, for he tore the things off him with savage energy.

It is evident that there is much dissatisfaction at the manner in which drinkers of non-alcoholic beverages are treated by those who in any way cater for their wants. At this time of the year one of their grievances is felt with especial severity—viz., the extortionate prices charged for mineral waters. The wholesale price of lemonade is about a shilling per dozen, yet at almost all places of entertainment fourpence or sixpence per bottle is charged. In popular holiday resorts this extortion is almost universal, so also is it at the railway stations. If the vendor is asked for a glass of beer or stout—which, by the way, unless kept cool, rather provokes thirst than quenches it—he is content with a reasonable rate of profit, but he considers the drinker of non-alcoholic drink fair game for extortion. It is difficult to see the remedy for an extortion which drives many an excursion party to resort again and again to quarts of beer for the sake of cheapness.

## CONTENTS.

Page	Page
MY LADY'S LOVERS ... 433	PORTET ... 455
HER BITTER FOR; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART ... 437	MISCELLANEOUS ... 455
TRUE TILL DEATH; OR, A FAILURE OF JUSTICE ... 441	CORRESPONDENCE ... 456
THE LOST DAUGHTER (A NOVELLETTE) ... 445	
THE SEVEN OF SMELL ... 449	
OUR COLUMBS FOR THE CURIOUS ... 450	
FACTS ... 451	
THE HEATHEN BELLS (A SHORT STORY) ... 451	
GEMS OF THOUGHT ... 455	
STATISTICS ... 455	
HOUSEHOLD TREAS- URES ... 455	

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS are requested to observe that, although we never publish their names and addresses, we desire to be furnished with them in all cases, in addition to selected names do please, otherwise communications may not receive attention. No charge is made for advertisements appearing on this page, and no responsibility is undertaken concerning them.

A. A.—Sapphire is the general name for a class of precious stones which receive different names according to their colour. The red sapphire is the Oriental ruby; the amethystine, the Oriental amethyst; the yellow, the Oriental topaz; the green, the Oriental emerald, and the blue is usually called the sapphire, the others being known by their colour names. The red sapphire, or ruby, is the most precious variety, and the finest rubies are more valuable than diamonds.

MARY H.—You are correct in your judgment; the great art in frying fish is to have it free from grease, and in that state it is one of the most delicate descriptions of food that can be given to an invalid, and at the same time the most nourishing. The sudden immersion in the fat solidifies the albumen in the flesh of the fish, and renders it easy of digestion; the coating of bread-crumbs prevents the fat penetrating into the fish, and when eaten by the invalid the skin should be removed, and only the white flesh partaken of.

H. B.—Alpaca is a species of soft hairy wool, which is now largely fabricated into cloth; it is taken from a species of the llama, a South American quadruped, and was introduced about 1836.

C. M.—Coal gas, for the purpose of lighting, was known ages ago to the Chinese.

J. H. B.—The highest known peak of the Andes in South America is that of Aconcagua, being 23,910 feet in elevation above the sea, and only inferior to the highest peaks of the Himalayas in Asia.

W. B.—A good mucilage for household purposes may be made by mixing three ounces of gum-arabic, three ounces of distilled vinegar, and one ounce of white sugar.

E. L.—For a greasy-looking face there is nothing better than water slightly acidulated with lemon juice.

J. C.—The Prince of Wales was married at Windsor, March 10, 1881, to Alexandra, eldest daughter of Christian IX., of Denmark.

G. D.—It is a difficult matter to get reliable figures as to the nationality of suicides. According to a pamphlet published recently in Berlin the suicidal mania is said to be spreading so rapidly in that city that the authorities are earnestly considering in what manner it can be checked. It is stated that from 1875 to 1878 290 cases of suicides were registered per million inhabitants at Berlin, 285 in Vienna, 450 in Leipzig, and only 85 in London. Paris nearly approaches the figures of Leipzig.

B. H. G.—Growing toe-nails are caused by the improper manner of cutting the nail (generally of the great toe), and then wearing a narrow, badly-made shoe. The nail, beginning to grow too long, and rather wide at the corner, is often trimmed round the corner, which gives temporary relief; but then it begins to grow wider in the side where it was cut off, and, as the shoe presses the flesh against the corner, the nail oats more and more into the raw flesh, which becomes excessively tender and irritable. If this state continues long, the toe becomes more and more painful and ulcerated, and fungus (round flesh) sprouts up from the sorest points. Walking greatly increases the suffering, till positive rest becomes indispensable. Begin the effort at cure by applying to the tender part a small quantity of the tincture of perchloride of iron. There is immediately a moderate sensation of pain, constriction or burning. In a few minutes the tender surface is felt to be dried up, and it ceases to be painful. The patient, who before could not put his foot to the floor, now finds that he can walk upon it without pain. By permitting the hardened, wood-like flesh to remain for two or three weeks, it can easily be removed by soaking the feet in warm water. A new and healthy structure is formed, firm and solid below. If, thereafter the nails be no more cut around the corners or sides, but always curved in across the front, they will in future only grow straight forward, and by wearing a shoe of reasonably good size and shape, all further trouble will be avoided.

## A NEW STORY

will be commenced in No. 959 of the LONDON READER, written by the author of "So Fair Her Face."

LONELY NELL, twenty-four, medium height, dark, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a tall, fair young gentleman about twenty-eight, with a view to matrimony.

OLIVE and OLGA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Olive is eighteen, short, fair, dark eyes, fond of home and dancing. Olga is twenty, medium height, fair, grey eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-five, tall.

EDWIN, twenty, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

BETTY, eighteen, dark, dark eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about nineteen.

KATIE W., eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be tall, fond of dancing.

BELL and NELLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Bell is eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes. Nelly is eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes. Respondents must be about twenty, tall, dark.

## DESOLATION.

SHE crossed my lone path as a golden beam  
Of the sun in his midday glory.  
Then passed away as a beautiful dream,  
Or the sheen of a brief, sweet story.  
And with her passed out all joy and light  
Of life that was worth retaining,  
And left as a flash in darkest night  
More ebon the darkness remaining.

And quick had upstung in the joyous pride  
Of the heart hope's loveliest flower,  
For sudden its growth, it withered and died,  
'Twas killed in its natal hour.  
And as it passed out, around the chilled heart  
Came swiftly and firmly stealing  
A something of sorrow nor joy a part,  
But simply an absence of feeling.

And thus I wend on my careless way,  
Feeling naught of joy or sorrow,  
And oft at the close of each aimless day  
I think of the listless to-morrow.  
Yes, listless! For all that pertains to earth,  
Be it joy, grief, plaudits or malice,  
To me are alike of little worth,  
Having drained life's bitterest chalice.

Not hers was the fault; she was pure and good,  
Was kindly and gentle to me.  
'Twas a vengeful sprite in my pathway stood,  
'Twas the ghoul of my destiny.  
And I think of her now as a beautiful spray  
Of angel imagination,  
That wreathed through my life in passing away  
A hopelessly void desolation.

GERTRIE and STELLA, two cousins, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Gertrie is eighteen, medium height, fair, fond of music and dancing. Stella is seventeen, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be tall, of loving dispositions, fond of music.

VICTORIA, MABEL and MAUDE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Victoria is eighteen, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home. Mabel is nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Maude is twenty-four, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be from twenty to twenty-five, tall, dark, good-looking.

ALBERTINA and LIVONIA, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Albertina is twenty-two, medium height, fair, fond of home and children. Livonia is seventeen, tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-five, tall, dark.

HILDA and MINNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-seven. Hilda is twenty-three, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Minnie is twenty-five, tall, dark, fond of home.

HARTILL and DAN, two soldiers, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Hartill is nineteen, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Dan is nineteen, medium height, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between seventeen and nineteen.

GWENDOLINE, twenty, tall, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of children, would like to correspond with a young gentleman.

ROLAND and DASHING WILL, two friends, would like to correspond with two good-looking young ladies about seventeen. Roland is tall, dark, dark eyes, fond of music and dancing. Dashing Will is tall, fair, hazel eyes, fond of music and dancing.

LADY ISABELLA, seventeen, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, good-looking young gentleman about nineteen.

TELEGRAPHIST, twenty, medium height, fair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty, fair, fond of home and children.

LAURA W. and EMMA D., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Laura W. is twenty-one, tall, dark hair, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing. Emma D. is eighteen, medium height, fair hair, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be under thirty, tall, dark, good-looking.

JOHN S., nineteen, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady of a loving disposition with a view to matrimony.

PEARL, nineteen, medium height, dark, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be tall, fair, fond of home and children.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LIVELY JOE is responded to by—Carrie, seventeen, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children.

BEN by—Lilly, twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home.

JIM by—May, twenty-two, tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of home.

DAISY by—J. T., twenty-seven, medium height, good-looking.

ROSE J. D. by—J. D., twenty-three, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and dancing.

JULIA by—S. B., twenty-three, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

LOVING MAN by—Wood Anemone, twenty-four, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

WALTER by—Lizzie, seventeen, dark, fond of music and dancing.

H. P. by—Clara, nineteen, dark, fond of dancing.

LOVING MAN by—Blue Eyes, twenty-seven, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition.

LIZZIE B. by—C. H., forty-two.

ROSAMOND M. by—Fred C., twenty-nine, medium height, good-looking.

H. P. by—Daisy, nineteen, dark, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of dancing.

ALICE by—Birdie, seventeen, fair, red hair, blue eyes.

FIFTH ROYAL LANCERS by—Birdie, nineteen, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing.

J. O'B. by—E. M. W., twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

LITTLE HARRY by—Alice, nineteen, medium height, fair.

JERSEY by—Nellie, eighteen, fair, fond of children.

LOUIE by—May, twenty, tall, fair, fond of home and music.

ERNEST by—Vin, twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and singing.

ERNEST by—Maggie M., twenty-two, fair.

H. P. by—Dark-eyed Katie F., nineteen, medium height, dark, fond of home and music.

FIFTH ROYAL LANCERS by—Blue-eyed Nell F., seventeen, medium height, fair, fond of music and dancing.

All the back Numbers, Parts, and Volumes of the LONDON READER are in print, and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom post free for Three Halfpence, Eightpence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

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N.B.—Correspondents must address their Letters to the Editor of the LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand, W.C. A. SMITH & CO.

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